

# SPECIAL OBLIGATIONS:
# ISSUES IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC ARCHITECTURE

THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

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# **SPECIAL OBLIGATIONS:**
# ISSUES IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC ARCHITECTURE

**The Forum on Public Architecture was held at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts on April 6 and 7, 1976. It was jointly sponsored by the Architects in Government Committee of The American Institute of Architects and the Federal Architecture Project of The National Endowment for the Arts.**

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**The Architects in Government Committee of The American Institute of Architects is responsible for developing programs to further recognition of the architect employed in Federal, state, and local governments.** Program objectives include increasing understanding of the special concerns of public sector architects and their influence on the quality of government architecture; providing insight on the current architectural objectives of government agencies; promoting the service of qualified architects in decision making positions in all levels of government; and establishing architects in governments committees at state and local AIA levels.

In late 1977, The Architects Government Committee will issue the first definitive report on the architect as a public employee, based upon a recent survey of over 2,000 architects working in Federal, state and local governments. The report will cover the background, functions, and motivations of public sector architects. For more information, contact the AIA Federal Agency Liaison at (202) 785-7382.

**The Federal Architecture Project was established within the National Endowment for the Arts to explore opportunities for improvement in Federal architectural design.** Its recommendations on mixed-use and adaptive-use of public buildings prompted the introduction and eventual passage of the Federal Public Buildings Cooperative Use Act of 1976 (Public Law 94-541). This legislation encourages the government to acquire and renovate landmark buildings for office and other needs, and promotes the use of public areas of Federal buildings for commercial, cultural, educational, and recreational activities.

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A Report on the Forum on Public Architecture

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# CONTENTS


| | |
|---|---|
| Foreword | 1 |
| Introduction | 2 |
| Purpose | 3 |
| The Milieu of the Public Architect | 4 |
| Decision Making in the Public Sector | 7 |
| Symbolic Functions of Public Architecture | 13 |
| Resource Scarcity and the Built Environment | 15 |
| The Impact of the Public Architect | 19 |
| Programming and Administration | 21 |
| Public Architecture/Public Art | 26 |
| For the Future | 30 |

# FOREWORD

**As the opening of this report on Public Architecture points out, "Millions of tax dollars are invested yearly in design and construction which drastically affect the character and continuity of communities."** The trend in public building is up: There was a predictable boost in all kinds of public building when funds were first made available to local, county, and state governments through revenue-sharing. While the delivery system may eventually be altered, it is likely that funds for public buildings will continue to be channeled to local governments across the country.

This offers a serious challenge to public officials. Any good public official — whether elected or appointed — feels a very heavy responsibility to spend the people's money carefully and wisely. Spending money carefully and wisely on new public buildings is a special challenge because the decisions are so complex. Those decisions are not just about the bricks and mortar of construction; they are about how people design, build, and use those buildings.

The decisions which relate to buildings — like almost all the decisions a public official must make — relate also to people. As a representative of "the people," you must decide whether or not to build a new building; exactly what its use will be; how much of the public money can be spent to build it; who should develop the analysis of all of the spaces of the building; who should design the building; who should build it (though this may be decided through a bidding procedure); and how that building should be operated.

**You may find some real help in understanding the scope of these problems by leafing through the pages of this booklet.** It was written to summarize the ideas expressed at a two-day "Forum on Public Architecture" attended by architects in public practice (i.e., architects who are employed by city, state or Federal governments) and by administrators of public building. The Forum was intended as an exchange of ideas "in the cause of better architecture in our public buildings."

Some of the most important ideas developed at the Forum — and discussed in detail on the pages that follow — are:

- Governments — Federal, state, and local — should set a high standard in building quality; innovate rather than imitate.
- Architects serving in government have very special responsibilities — but work under difficult conditions with little hope of the kind of recognition that any professional craves and needs. As a result, it is difficult to attract the best talent to government service.
- The key role of the architect in public service is the development of a more productive partnership between the public and private sectors.
- Governments have a unique responsibility to be open to new ideas that are in the public interest — such as the re-use of worthwhile older buildings, conservation of energy, and making public buildings appealing to the public.
- The selection of architects and other design professionals on the basis of "fee-bidding" rather than competence is not only unfair to those professionals — it is unfair to the taxpayer who is paying the bills.
- In many cases insufficient attention is paid to the need for planning and programming the uses of a building before the design gets underway.
- In any public building project, the public must be kept involved from the first. It is not enough to tell them; they must be asked to participate in the process.
- In the design of public buildings, pure functionalism is not enough. As in our Capitol buildings, there is a symbolism of public buildings which people, however subjectively, really need and want. "Architectural symbolism is a very basic thing in our lives, although for some reason we make very little effort to understand it."
- The public now sees as important the conservation of our resources: making better use of what we have with adaptive use and re-use of buildings and recycling of neighborhoods.

**This report is intended to focus national attention on the special responsibilities and special problems of everyone involved in public building — both architects and administrators. The goal is to build greater awareness of the opportunity — through a higher calibre of public architecture — to build an environment of quality for all the people.**

# INTRODUCTION

*Billions of tax dollars are invested yearly in design and construction which drastically affect the character and continuity of communities. As public design professionals and administrators, your decisions have powerful influence over the total built environment, altering transportation systems, accessibility to government, land use, and even life style. . . .*

*"This Forum on Public Architecture has been convened for you to exchange perspectives and experiences in administering the design and construction of public works, plazas, and buildings. The American Institute of Architects and the National Endowment for the Arts share the hope that the discussions which ensue may lead to a redefinition of the distinct obligations and potentials of public architecture.*

—from the program of the first Forum on Public Architecture, held at the John M. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. April 6 and 7, 1976

The Forum was intended to focus national attention—especially by governmental officials and administrators—on the special responsibilities and special problems of the architect in public service, and to build a greater awareness of the special obligations of public architecture in building a quality environment for all people.

This report is excerpted from the transcript of a two-day conference organized by the American Institute of Architects and the National Endowment for the Arts. In the highlights of the discussion and debate among a group of distinguished professionals: architects and planners in both private practice and public service at the Federal, state, and local level; historians and researchers; a leading architectural critic; and public officials concerned with improving the quality of public architecture. The latter group included U.S. Senator Robert B. Morgan of North Carolina; Mayor Mortimor J. Matthews of Pasadena; Bill Matuszeski of the President's Council on Environmental Quality; Jacob Robbins, director of planning, City of Fremont, California; Jerome R. Butler, city architect, City of Chicago; Frank J. Matzke, former executive director of the Illinois Capital Development Board; Betty Cook, Office of Cultural Affairs, City of Boston; Sidney Brower, chief of design analysis, City of Baltimore; and Walter A. Meisen, now an architect in private practice but, at the time of the meeting, Assistant Commissioner for Construction Management of the General Services Administration in Washington.

Attending the conference and participating in the debate were architects in public practice and administrators from thirty of the fifty states.

# PURPOSE

**The objective of the Forum—to create better communications in the cause of better architecture in our public buildings—was sounded by Forum moderator Harry Harmon, chairman of the Architects in Government Committee of The American Institute of Architects.** In welcoming participants on behalf of the National Endowment for the Arts and the AIA, Harmon pointed out that, "As design leaders in state and city governments, you are important and influential components in the delivery of public architecture. The unique opportunity to meet face to face with other people who are involved in the same kind of endeavor is one of the most important aspects of this conference, for one of our greatest resources in improving the quality of our public building is our individual experience. The message is clear: communications."

**Michael Straight, deputy chairman of the National Endowment, urged that governments—Federal, state, and local—set an innovative standard in building quality.** And he expressed the Endowment's willingness to help. "The Endowment has since its beginnings in 1965 placed architecture, design, landscape architecture, and interior planning high on the list of disciplines we try to serve and support. The Federal government is, as you know, the largest client in the free world. When we add the work commissioned by state and city governments to that, the volume of design and construction involved is truly enormous.

"When Pericles was campaigning in Athens during the Fifth Century B.C., he said 'We do not imitate. We are a model for others.' Twenty-four centuries later, that concept was reasserted in this country with the Guiding Principles for Federal Architecture. But—with some notable exceptions—Federal architecture has seldom been a model; instead it has imitated. And it has frequently imitated the worst, not the best, that is available. . . . And that is a tragic mistake, because it does not cost more to build beautiful buildings than it costs to build ugly buildings. There is no reason why government cannot, in the Periclean sense, set the example.

"In 1972, the President asked the Endowment to help every Federal agency in this direction, aid every Federal agency in setting the standard for excellence in design. Much has been accomplished [and is discussed later in this report]. But plainly, to be effective, this concept and movement has to spread to the state and the city and the community levels across the country.

"I want to impress upon you the earnestness of our commitment in the Federal government to do what we can to broaden the horizons [as architects and administrators] of what you can contribute to the quality of building and life in America.

**AIA President Louis de Moll noted the growing importance of state and local governments in building a quality environment, and expressed the AIA's willingness to help these governments fulfill their new role.** De Moll commented that the Forum was timely for a number of reasons.

"First there is a growing importance of state and local governments in the whole construction complex, because the Federal government, through revenue sharing, is making more money available to local governments and giving those local governments more options in how they spend that money and conduct their building programs.

"Secondly, officials in state and local government have a very important role in the procurement of architectural and engineering services. It is an important role because as goes the selection process at the state and local government level, so will go selection in the private sector. And obviously the selection of the design team is of utmost importance in creating a higher quality environment.

"Finally, I think it's especially important to have this Forum during these difficult economic times. Out of this adversity has come an era of consumerism which is affecting the building industry. We're in an age in which people expect to have the highest quality building for every dollar spent.

"The AIA has a lot of resources at hand to assist state and local administrators and architects. We are a clearinghouse for information on state legislation affecting design and building. We also have many documents available on architect/engineer selection, on energy conservation, on land use, and the like. And we can offer technical assistance.

"In the last few years, AIA has been putting more and more emphasis on our state and local components, instead of concentrating our effort on the national level here in Washington. You can look to your state AIA organizations for assistance on any program or project you are trying to accomplish at the state or local level."

# THE MILIEU OF THE PUBLIC ARCHITECT

**Bill Lacy, Director of Architecture + Environmental Arts of the National Endowment, explained the Endowment's efforts to rebuild the role and the responsibility of the public architect—again, in the cause of a higher quality of public architecture.** "This meeting is a natural outgrowth of our work in the Federal design improvement program, and particularly our Federal Architecture Project. The design improvement project—where we have assumed not a grants-making role but an initiative role—is one of our most important projects; this conference is one example of our efforts.

"In 1972 a Presidential directive aimed at improving the quality of design in government by addressing the problem in four ways: initiating annual meetings on Federal design; seeking ways to upgrade the appearance and effectiveness of all printed communications used by the government (which is by itself a staggering assignment if you think about it); improving the methods by which architects and designers were hired for government services; and finally, revising and expanding the original Guiding Principles for Federal Architecture. Our meeting today is intended to focus national attention on the unique responsibilities and difficulties of the architect in government and will, I hope, lead to a greater awareness of the special obligations and problems of public architecture.

"Probably the first public architect in our history was Benjamin Latrobe, best known and justly admired for his work on the U.S. Capitol. His views on his term of Federal employment are less well known. Latrobe was appointed as surveyor of the public buildings by President Jefferson in 1803. After a decade of stormy disputes with fellow architects and Jefferson's political opponents, he was dismissed by a vote of Congress. While preparing to leave Washington, he wrote to a friend: 'I am bidding an eternal adieu to the malice, backbiting, slander, trickery, fraud and hypocrisy, lofty pretentions and scanty means, boasts of patriotism and bargaining of conscience, upstart haughtiness and five thousand other nuisances that constitute the very essence of this community. The more you stir it, the more it stinketh.'

"Latrobe summed up his experience in one sentence: 'Government service is a ruinous connection.' And yet he served in the age that many historians and critics think produced our finest public architecture. We ought to keep that in mind as we consider contemporary failings and accomplishments.

"We all know that government officials and civil servants are not held in the highest repute by their fellow citizens these days. Within reason, that skepticism is healthy. But I think public architects have been getting less than their due both in public recognition and in institutional reward."

**Lacy addressed the problem of attracting the highest calibre professionals to government in terms of institutionalized limitations of opportunities.** "It has been difficult to attract the best graduates from our architectural schools. But at the Federal level, in cooperation with the Civil Service Commission, we've been trying a new approach.

"Until this year, an architect or illustrator or designer or photographer who applied for a Federal job did it just like anyone else—through written forms which called for a description of his or her degrees and work experience, but did not call for any visual evidence of capability, creativity, or talent. Now, however, applicants have to submit selected portfolios of their work, which are then screened by panels of government and private practitioners in their particular fields. We think this communicates to job-seekers a serious effort on the part of government to ensure design quality. We know already that the procedure is raising the professional level of young designers being admitted to the Federal service.

"Another of the many disincentives of becoming a public architect has been difficulty of becoming professionally licensed. The AIA's Architects in Government Committee has been working on this problem and is making headway. But regulations of many state registration boards still give little credit for work experience acquired in public agencies.

"Another problem is that even after having been hired and registered, the chances for promotion are often nonexistent. Some civil service systems simply call anyone involved in design and construction an 'engineer.' But the problem goes beyond mere labeling. Architects and designers are often not considered for top-level management positions because it is assumed that they are limited specialists. And therefore we find—with rare and happy exceptions—few architects selected for top public posts.

"I think that these problems of recruitment, registration, and promotion are related." What are the solutions? Lacy suggests more in-house design work, better preparation by the schools, and more recognition of the importance of the public architect.

"Few public architects in this country actually design our public buildings. Most of that work is contracted out, as you know, to private design firms. And I'm not suggesting that we go back to the days when the government did all its own design work . . . although history is now giving that design work pretty high marks. But I find it hard to believe that we will succeed in attracting much of the available new talent unless we offer increased opportunities at the design boards. I also think that much of the registration problem would disappear if government work were more design-conscious.

The charge that professionals are being deprived of their livelihood whenever a public agency tries to take on more of its own design is not, I think, that serious a matter. I believe we've learned from the lessons of the past that private designers do not, in fact, lose work opportunities because the number of public design jobs increases and the profession as a whole doesn't lose any ground, really.

"In England, where over 50 per cent of the profession is made up of government architects, they're having a very lively dispute on this subject. And the Royal Institute of British Architects, to its credit, is encouraging this debate and they're contemplating reforms."

Lacy also argued that: "Architecture schools, for their part, are not providing the kind of education needed to fully qualify architects for public service. I think that some courses could be taught that would be very beneficial to students, whether or not they plan to go into public service. How many times, for example, are students asked to approach a design problem from the point of view of the public architect? Or asked to think about the user/client designer problem and what that entails? And how many are taught public policy or public administration? Or how to analyse the results of an environmental impact statement? And how many schools offer training in organizational management decision-making?

"The people who control the top governmental jobs feel that an architectural degree is not necessarily a credential when it comes to managing personnel, analyzing public issues, and dispersing public funds. Only recently has the AIA begun to acknowledge the importance of public architects And although private architects make up the majority in this country, there are thousands more who are employed by government and their voice in professional matters is disproportionately small. I think what's needed is a more productive partnership between public and private sectors.

**Over-all, Lacy argued for greater recognition of the architect in public service for his key roles in the government's partnership with the private architect.** He pointed out that a state office building, for example, should not be designed merely to service the functional needs of the office workers for eight hours a day. "That's a given. But a government office building has a lot of other client groups who are rarely taken into account. The office building, in addition to



**Although there are strong arguments for both sides, no final consensus has been reached on the desirability of having government staff architects actually design buildings. That it can be done—and done with panache—is exemplified by the Navy Pier in Chicago. The primary goal of the Navy Pier restoration is to return the facility to its original purpose: providing for the recreational needs of the people of Chicago. Spaces for such events as the annual Folk Fair, as well as for biking and picnicking, will be available at the Pier. A solar energy system supplying space heating and hot water for one of the Pier's office buildings is yet to be constructed.**

working for the government employees who are there every day, should work for and be attractive to the citizens who come into transact public business. Not many do. Most of our public buildings are not very public. There is no recognition of 'the government as host'—that is, serving in the function of host. There are no convenient waiting rooms, no public services or amenities that say 'we're here for your use as well as for the employees' use.' Finally, the public building has an obligation to be part of a community—a significant civic landmark which helps people find their way or provides a natural gathering place. And if it's in the central business district, it has an obligation to enhance the social and economic functions of downtown by providing rental space for shops and restaurants, and open space for concerts and art exhibits.

"Public architects are in the best position of anyone to see that public buildings fulfill these multiple duties—because they participate in writing the program for government projects, advise administrators and legislators on the costs and the benefits, and work with (and review the plans of) private architects commissioned to do the work. But most importantly, the public architect is still around when the private architect has collected his fees and gone away. The public architect is sometimes the only person who provides continuity from one project to the next, who can see what went right and what went wrong and assure that the mistakes are not repeated and the successes are.

"The public architect is also in the best position of anyone to see that the public building is operated well by its building manager. How a building is designed is one thing; and how it is used is another. It's usually the building manager who decides to lock and chain all the doors leading out to the architect's beautifully designed, award-winning top floor promenade. Or who makes the building lobby and the plaza the focus of art-in-industry displays. It's the building manager who can program the use of public rooms and spaces after working hours or on weekends or erect chain-link fences to keep the public out. Building managers can encourage employees to participate in the design of their own work space, or impose austere and oppressive working environments. The public architect should be responsible for building management's contribution to the ultimate success of the building. If we can estimate life-cycle costs for energy systems, we can estimate life-cycle costs for amenities that serve citizens and employees.

"Even though private and public architects serve different interests, they share the same professional goals of excellence and social responsibility. Latrobe was wrong, you know. Government service need not be a 'ruinous connection'—it can be a fortuitous one."

# DECISION MAKING IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

**Bill Slayton, executive vice president of the AIA and one-time Federal Urban Renewal Administrator, spoke of the obligation—and the opportunity—of the public sector in improving the quality of design.** "I think the public sector has an obligation to set an example what good design can be, to demonstrate to the private sector what good design can be, to establish a standard for good design that others can try to emulate. I think that ought to be a very conscious role of government when it erects public structures. We ought to be proud of our public structures and our public structures ought to lead the way, rather than be imitative and following any well-established trend.

"This has been done this in several instances. The Boston City Hall competition produced a good example. The Toronto City Hall competition produced another. Government can provide examples to the private sector in areas such as restoration and adaptive use. Here is the opportunity to preserve a great deal of the good architecture, some of it great architecture, that we have built in the past. We have, thankfully, begun to establish a different attitude toward public structures built in the past, and are now recognizing that they have real validity, real strength, and offer a real tie to past. The Old Executive Office Building is a good example. Fifteen years ago, the GSA was planning to tear it down. The reasons given was that it was going to be expensive to air-condition. It *wasn't* really efficient with all those high ceilings, and it was difficult to clean and maintain those beautiful marble floors. But we know that preserving such a building and making it useful in today's terms is one of the most important things we can do.

"Another crucial area in which the federal government and some state governments have taken a leadership role is the conservation of energy in buildings. We in the American Institute of Architects have pushed very hard to get the country to recognize the tremendous amount of energy that can be saved by retrofitting existing buildings and by designing



**The old Federal courts building in St. Paul, Minnesota, has been transferred to local ownership under a Federal law permitting free transfer of surplus historic Federal property to state and local governments. When renovation is completed, the interior sky-lighted courtyard will provide space for ceremonies, crafts shows, and chamber music. The building will also house the Minnesota Museum of Art, the city's chamber orchestra, a theatre group, a radio station and a rathskeller.**

new buildings so that they will be energy efficient. We have pushed Congress to provide legislation of various kinds that will contribute to this objective. We can show the private sector, again, the real dollar savings in retrofitting existing buildings and in designing new buildings so that they are really energy efficient. Our studies indicate that, on the average, 30 per cent of the energy consumed in an existing building—the total energy—can be saved by retrofitting that building. Our studies show that proper design of a new structure can save 60 per cent of the energy that might normally be used in a standard kind of structure. These substantial energy savings are an essential part of our public objectives.

"Another special obligation—and opportunity—for the architect in government and the government administrator is to provide good public spaces in the public buildings. Our public buildings are frequently the only buildings in a city or town that provide suitable spaces for community assembly, that help create a sense of community. I'll use the same example again: the Boston City Hall. It is used often for public assembly of one kind and another, and serves those purposes well. Another example: the gracious public spaces of the San Francisco City Hall. They provide not only places for ceremonies, but also a sense of beauty and spaciousness that is important to the individual citizen as he enters a public building.

"Finally, I would like to make a plea for the recognition of the importance of city planning and city objectives whenever a Federal or state public building is going up in a city. It seems to me essential that any state architect give careful consideration to the city's planning goals and in fact look at it in this positive way: 'How can this public structure be used to help the city reach the objectives that it wants to achieve?' "

**Slayton also told the government architects and administrators that selection of architects and engineers on the basis of "fee-bidding" rather than competence is unfair to architects—and to the taxpayer who is paying the bills.** "The selection of architects and engineers obviously has a direct bearing on the quality of design. We have opposed, in the AIA, any selection process that requires architects to submit proposals which include their fee, because we feel strongly that architects will then be judged on the price of their fee rather than on the quality of their work and their design. We think that, in such a system, the item that first disappears or gets reduced, is design time.

"Any architect knows what it costs to do working drawings, surveys, so forth and so on. But we don't really know what it costs to design in terms of design time. And design time is what gets cut down when an architect is going to reduce a fee. It means that less time will have to be spent designing—and I'm not talking just about beauty. I'm talking about function and efficiency.

"If we wish to have buildings that are well designed, in terms of efficiency, function, and beauty, then it is necessary for the architectural firm to have a fee that permits sufficient time to be spent in design.

"Here I would like to promote *Composition Guidelines for Architectural Services*, a little document that is useful to the client as well as to the architect in analyzing the costs of architectural services to the client. We feel that this document can help the client in determining what a proper, adequate, architectural fee is. At the same time it can help the architect in making sure that he knows what he is charging, or what he is proposing to spend, when he quotes a fee. So we push hard for what we call the standard selection process. We urge you to interview, say, three architects that you feel are competent, able people to do the job you have in hand. Only after you select the one who seems best qualified should you start discussing fee. If you cannot agree on a fee, obviously you are free to negotiate with your second choice.

**Wally Meisen, until recently assistant commissioner for construction management in the Public Building Service and now an architect in private practice, moderated a panel on "Decision Making for Public Architecture" and had some insightful preliminary comments on the constraints facing public architects.** "How do you go about making decisions in the public sector? First, you have to answer some basic questions. Should the public architect innovate? Earlier speakers have said 'Yes!' Others may say no: perhaps the public architect should use the public's money only on those things which are tried and true. Of course then you have to ask who, in our industry today, will research and develop new techniques?

"There's also the question of contracting for architect-engineer services. I was very disappointed to learn that of 44 states which responded to an AIA questionnaire, 24 said they used fee contracts based on a percentage of construction cost. How counterproductive can you be? I can't think of a greater depressant on architectural innovation and imagination—or a worse motivation for the architect to try and keep construction costs as low as possible for the desired quality level.

"Then there is the question of selecting and administering the work of architects. If we select bad architects, we can't expect to get anything but bad architecture. But I think that even if we select great architects, we can still get bad architecture unless we, in administering the architect's work, relax some of the constraints." Meisen listed some of those constraints: the requirement that a "non-involved" participant can become involved in the decision-making process because of the public architect's accountability to the citizenry at large; the greater amount of criticism by journalists; and legal procedures (particularly in architect selection, or in the requirement that architects must specify multiple "equal" products that sometimes "inhibit good selection criteria in the name of honesty."

"Finally," Meisen said, "if we're going to expect great public architecture, we're going to have to accept some failures. If you are going to be innovative—to try something new in the hope of a great success—you are going to have some failures. Unless the public and the legislators and the critics are willing not only to praise the successes in public architecture but to be tolerant of occasional failures, then the public administrator and the public architect cannot try anything new."

**Architectural critic Bill Marlin spoke of the increasing importance of (and positive prospects for) better administration and the proper role of the critic in the cause of better public architecture.** According to Marlin: "The sphere of practical application of the building arts and sciences, its circumference touching every curbside in the country, is your sphere as government administrators. Your work touches people, touches upon every day life, and can put people in closer touch not only with the services and spirit

of their government, but with options for constructive community encounters that can make life more wholesome and well-rounded and fulfilling.

"There are many among you public architects and administrators who have done more for the cause of improved public design than we aesthetes and critics and theoreticians and commentators all put together. Question: Do you goof now and then? Sure. Question: Is ugliness still next to Godliness in your operations manuals? Yes. Do many of your agencies and departments still cut every conceivable corner only to come up with right-angled box after right-angled box? Certainly.

"But I do not get awfully upset about the prospects for banality when increasingly, if one cares to look, the prospects for long-term quality in our design are more positive.

"It all has to do with strategy, I believe. In my work it certainly does. Some say the critic should stand back, chronicle, observe, analyze, not be involved in the setting of policy or in counseling on its implementation. I do not agree. Why shouldn't the critic, in addition to his obligation to state what he thinks are the shortcomings of performance, be prepared to deal realistically and make recommendations about the tough stuff of planning and procurement and operation and the constraints on those processes? There is very clearly a sphere of criticism that transcends the often-gratuitous carping about momentary stumblings along the road to real reform. There is very clearly a concept of criticism as an ongoing effort to comment upon the context in which public administrators work—too often as mere purchasing agents of a tasteful bent still well down the totem pole of public formulation. What is important is that your concerns for design and the cause of design need to be factored into the decision process at the front end of things—not called in later on as a physician might call in a pharmacist to fill an order.

"The point of my being here is simply to say that critics are your colleagues, helping you design a climate of awareness and acceptance [for better public architecture.] Believe it or not, slowly but surely, the cause of architecture is unfolding as it should. Despite—indeed, because—of the economic retrenchment we are going through, there is heightened reflection about, as well as reform in, architecture's activist function within the administrative arena. To the extent that you help design a more secure place for it, you will be every bit as creative a person as those professionals more accustomer to service in the traditional private sector."

**Senator Robert Morgan of North Carolina, now chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Buildings and Grounds, emphasized the need for more careful planning in the pre-design stages.** The Senator asked some tough questions about the "build-don't build" decision, about rehabbing older buildings, about hiring architects for pre-planning work, about monumental vs. functional buildings, about the government's role in experimentation, and about the knotty problems of architect selection.

"I am a layman," he said, "but I am also a public servant who is charged with making sure that public money is as well spent as possible when it comes to building. To me, the most important part of the process is the pre-decision stage. Here the general parameters for the building are outlined, and some fairly complicated questions have to be answered. We have to make asking those questions a routine part of the pre-planning stage for public buildings.

"One early question ought to be whether we really need to build the new building or whether there is a suitable existing structure which can be re-used by rehabilitating and refitting it. I introduced into the Senate, with Senator Buckley of New York, a bill which is now public law—requiring the federal government to re-use historic and other older, sound buildings whenever possible, instead of building new. I hope you will study this law and consider it for possible use, or at least as a guideline for action in your own state.

"Another relatively non-technical decision you must make at the pre-design stage is whether you're going to build a monumental building, or a simpler, more functional building. I think monumental buildings have their place—we don't need to be so cost-conscious that we forget how much architecture represents the spirit of the people. Great archi-




**The City of Oakland, California, learned the economics of adaptive reuse by first hand experience. The estimates it received on construction of a new center for the performing arts came to $13 million, with a four year schedule. The city then bought and renovated the 1931 Paramount movie theater for $2 million and, in less than two years, opened its "new" cultural center.**

tecture is one way in which we, as a people, show our respect for our country and the spirit we share. When you think of building monumental buildings, of course, you subject yourself to public criticism. But as public servants, I think sometimes you have to rise above that criticism and do what you think is best for your state and for your nation. I, for one, would like to see more state and local governments become involved in projects of this sort when it is appropriate.

"But you need to make the decision early, so that you don't find yourself with a monument when what you were really looking for was a plain, functional building.

"Another question is more complicated: How much experimenting should be done in the construction of public buildings? I'm sure you've heard it argued that the public sector should undertake tremendous amounts of experimentation—for example, in the conservation of energy and the use of new energy sources in buildings. I think only the public sector can afford the cost and the risks that you sometimes have to take. But I do not think we can experiment pell mell with one building after another. Neither do I think government ought to stay out of experimentation entirely—we should try to stimulate solutions to problems that are facing us.

"The selection of architects is a particularly difficult problem. One idea that has been suggested to me is that an architect be hired for pre-planning work—on a flat fee basis—and that he or she would not be eligible to execute the final plan. Precluding vested interest in the eventual outcome would theoretically guarantee the objectivity of the advice given. This might be a good idea.

"In the area of architect selection, we've had some suggestion that architects be chosen by competitive bidding, and bills have been introduced to require exactly this. But surely the issue of competence must remain the single most important criterion. I think the system now used by the General Services Administration will avoid a lot of criticism. [That system has regional panels of architects in private practice draw up a list of three to five competent firms appropriate for a given project, from which the final firm is chosen by the professional staff of the GSA, subject to agreement with the firm chosen on fee.]

Senator Morgan concluded: "I think we need to hear more about new approaches that have been tried at the state or local level. . . ."

**Mayor Mortimer J. Matthews of Pasadena, California, who is an architect, described some of the planning and design accomplishments in his city—and the processes and heavy citizen involvement that made it all work.** "Pasadena has, in proportion to its size, all of the assets, attractions, deficiencies, and problems of any American city. It is considered to be a microcosm of urban America on 364 days of the year—on the 365th we have the Rose Bowl. I'm here not to boost, or to boast about, Pasadena, but to underscore its typicality. If we have had some successes with our public architecture, so can you. All it really takes is determination."

Pasadena has had some notable successes with its public architecture. As the Mayor pointed out: "Pasadena's city forefathers had the wisdom, in the late 1820's, to provide a beautifully planned, constructed, and since-maintained civic center of classic proportion and design. The civic center includes the City Hall, the main public library, and a civic auditorium; and is supplemented by the buildings of the post office, courthouse, gas company, and the YM/YWCA in a carefully arranged complex. In recent years, the central business district has been undergoing major change as Pasadena changes from a residential community to a subregional urban center. "One function of municipal government has been to ensure that the city did not grow haphazardly, but that it be developed . . . in harmony with its architectural tradition." Buildings that have been added in recent years include BankAmericard Southwest headquarters, which in return for tax-increment financing was designed with 45-foot setbacks, underground parking, and an extensively landscaped plaza with a major fountain. "What might have been just another warehouse in a suburban area ended up as an attractive, arbor-clad project designed by Edward Durrell Stone which complements our civic center, maintains open space, and provides diversified employment."

Another major project is the city's own $20-million conference center and exhibit center—all largely underground—designed by John Carl Warnecke and James Ream. A hotel by another architect was built on air rights over the city-owned project—and pays some $100,000 a year for the air rights. Says the mayor: "Insistence on sensitive design for this major public project has enabled us to encourage and convince private developers to risk the additional capital necessary to produce a higher-than-usual level of design.

Still another major project is the Arts Center College of Design. In return for permission to build in a residential area, the school agreed to place 80 per cent of the land in permanent open space. The building, designed by Craig Elwood, is in fact a glassed-in trestle bridging a canyon.

These and other design successes have, of course, contributed to the quality of living in Pasadena.

**The Mayor set down these rules for success in making the process work:**

1. "You must get culturally knowledgeable and influential citizens organized and into a position to interact with government—preferably getting a few of them into key elective or appointed positions.

2. "You need able staff people in high positions, preferably a special assistant to the chief city administrative officer, who can oversee the community development and planning process—both public and private—in its entirety. Such a person can concentrate on the coordination of individual, piecemeal developments desired and mesh them into a broad, comprehensive development fabric that will best serve the public interest.

3. "An aggressive, alert, and skillful community redevelopment agency is a critical tool for implementing revitalization and superior public architecture within the community.

4. "The ultimate decision-maker for public architecture—usually the city council—needs a variety of citizen advisory committees and commissions to help them make public architecture acceptable to the population it is serving." Mayor Matthews mentioned a planning commission, a cultural heritage commission, a city design committee, and—as needed—ad hoc committees to comment on the planning and oversee the design of major projects, public or private. "This does not mean," said the Mayor, "that you have design by committee. There is a design architect involved in each of these processes. But committees of citizens can help keep major problems from arising, and have tended to

head off taxpayers' suits and other obstructions to the process."

**Meisen closed the panel on "Decision Making for Public Architecture" with a call for creating a climate in which excellence can flourish.** "I have two summary recommendations: Number one is that you take pride in the work of private architects who work for you. If you can associate yourself with that work, you'll be creating an environment in which good architecture can happen. Secondily, I think the creation of that environment is the most important thing you can do as public design administrators. You'll never get a rose from crab-grass seeds—which is why architect selection is so important. But you won't get a rose even from a rose cutting unless you give it the right soil, and the right atmosphere . . . the right conditions for it to grow. If you can open your mind and your staff and your office to that kind of atmosphere, good architecture will happen and the public will benefit."

**Following the panel discussion, series of questions and criticisms were raised from the floor.**

Said Raquel Ramati of New York City: "It seems to me that there is a notion here that if all our public buildings were architectural gems we would, somehow, solve the problems of the physical environment. In my experience in New York



**Cooperation between the public and private sectors in the creation of buildings to meet their respective needs must be undertaken carefully, but there is potential for spectacular success. Kalamazoo, Michigan, wanted a downtown civic center that would complement existing retail land uses. Lacking sufficient funds and feeling unsure about how to put together a commercially successful mixture of uses, the city allied itself with a private development corporation. The result is a three-level activity space containing shops, restaurants and recreational and conference facilities surmounted by a seven-story office and hotel tower.**

City—for instance, in housing, where the best architecture has been public work—there's been absolutely no influence of that architecture on the private sector, which is greatly responsible for our environment.

"A related comment: "One of the major problems of important public buildings is that they don't seem to relate to anything about them. The World Trade Center may be a great building, but the way it relates to its surroundings seems to me kind of questionable.

"A final point: I agree with Senator Morgan that it is important to try and find ways to re-use older buildings. But I don't even see any program to try and clean up some of the older Federal and state buildings—which would help create an awareness of the importance of these buildings and maybe encourage other owners of landmarks to follow that example."

Jerry Sanders of Arkansas asked Senator Morgan: "Would you agree that many people in legislative or administrative positions don't really understand what the real purpose of an architect can be?" Said the Senator: "I do agree that the role of the architect is not fully appreciated by many in government—whether at the Federal, state, or local level. For one thing, unfortunately we don't have many architects in our Congress or state legislatures. The role of the architect does need to be emphasized and better understood by our legislatures."

Wally Meisen commented: "Respect is much like leadership. It is rarely given; it is most often earned. We've got to earn it by what we do, not what we might do."

Lois Craig of the National Endowment raised the "touchy issue" of architects in public service undertaking more design work: "As an incentive for better public design, as an incentive for more good architects to enter public service, I wonder if it isn't time to look at giving the public architect some part of the design responsibility . . .?" Meisen commented: "I think that same incentive could be created by giving recognition to the client architect [the public architect] as well as the design architect. We should associate the public architects, and that important role, with the credits for any building. The tendency is to blame the government, the client, when a building doesn't work; and to credit the designer when a building does work."

Harry Burkhart of Indiana commented on architect selection: "I think it's absolutely imperative that we in state government be certain—and I've been trying to do it—that architects and engineers are selected on the basis of competence, on their ability—and stop the peddling of fees. It is very difficult to try and take a bid on an idea.

"The idea of having a selection board of good architects in private practice to suggest the best firms for a public building is good. But it has the disadvantage that it disqualifies some of the best people—those on the selection board.

"And I don't think that we in the public sector should get involved in more design. Very small jobs which are not profitable for a private firm, maybe. But if we took on larger jobs and put them on a time basis—a project cost basis—I think 99 per cent of them would end up costing the public more money."

Added Max Boesiger of Idaho: "We find difficulties with the architects' code of ethics. We are in the midst of creating a Capitol Mall in Boise, and it has presented us with a great many very complicated problems. We did want to take the best possible advantage of the architectural talent. We at first thought to have a competition—but found that the process would have been very expensive for everyone involved. We did narrow down to three firms—and gave them the criteria, the function, the problems that we wanted to overcome, the goals we wanted to accomplish. Two of the firms gave us some great ideas—but one very capable architect would not say how he would approach the problem because he felt it was a violation of the code of ethics ["free sketches" or detailed proposals given as a inducement for a client to hire an architect *is* a violation of the AIA code of ethics]. But we do agree that negotiation of fee should be the last thing. Once we've chosen a firm, we negotiate with that firm for a lump sum fee. That way it's no skin off his nose, and a benefit to us, if the building comes in under budget."

# SYMBOLIC FUNCTIONS OF PUBLIC ARCHITECTURE

**The concept—and the importance—of architectural symbolism to America's people was introduced with a slide film.** Entitled "The Evolution of State Capitol Design in America," it was prepared by historian William Seale, but—because of his illness—presented to the Forum by Dr. Denys Peter Myers, also a distinguished architectural historian. The film traced the development of the American state capitol—from the earliest pre-Revolutionary days to the most recent capitol, the stunning (and highly symbolic) capitol of Hawaii.

Dr. Myers traced the evolution of the state capitols from the earliest—"the first Colonial houses of government were not unlike big residences; rectangular, simple, sometimes with a lantern or cupola riding the ridge of the roof for use as a fire watch or a place to hang lanterns to celebrate the King's birthday. Inside, the two Chambers—the Council on one side of the hall and the Assembly on the other—were nearly always upstairs. Downstairs might be a court room, a clerk's office, a public market or rented offices [early examples of the newly popular mixed use in public buildings]. In these simple, white-washed surroundings, the American system grew slowly as the 17th and 18th centuries went by. . . . It was rare for the colonial assembly to trouble itself with monumental architecture, but we must also recognize that the little Colonial state houses were monumental in comparison with their surroundings."

From there, Dr. Myers showed the beginning of monumen-



**The idea of mixed use of public buildings—which flourished during colonial times—is undergoing a long overdue renaissance. For example, this new Federal office building in Washington, D.C., will lease ground floor space to retail shops to help increase the commercial vitality of its neighborhood. It includes an interior courtyard with wide entry to the street which will feature an ice skating rink in winter, an outdoor cafe in the warmer months.**

tal public architecture with the capitol at Williamsburg: the development of others in Boston, in Newport, Rhode Island, and "the tallest building in colonial America," known to us as Independence Hall in Philadelphia. The capitol at Annapolis, completed in 1789, was considered "the most gorgeous piece of architectural in America." Dr. Myers traced the development of capitols through Richmond, Virginia, New Jersey's 1794 state house, and the struggles between "professional" Philadelphia architects and the "carpenter design" of Stephen Hills—which was chosen overwhelmingly by the farmers who comprised the [Pennsylvania] Capitol Commission. "It was a milestone—the first state capitol which reflected the symbolic syndrome which was now in capitol architecture to stay: the widely spaced wings, separated by a narrow, very dramatic rotunda which rose to the dome and was richly decorated with encircling galleries, pilaster, pediments; and lighted by occuli from which shafts of light fell into a rather dark space. The chambers on the other hand, were bright with light from tall windows and unadorned."

A series of Greek temples followed—in, for example, Illinois and Iowa, and Ohio; then Beaux Arts palaces; then skyscraper capitols as in Nebraska then a *style moderne* building for Oregon in 1936. The newest capitol—by Belt, Lemmon and Lo and John Carl Warnecke—"combines legendary symbolism and history with traditional capitol symbols to create a building both dramatic and unique. Set in a lagoon, it has palm trunk columns, a dome-like governor's suite on top, balanced houses set in great lobes of volcanic rock, and a great open salon."

**The moral of the presentation for the architects and administrators at the Forum: "Architectural symbolism is a very basic factor in our lives, although for some reason we make very little effort to understand it. . . .** Taken as a group of fifty, the state capitols represent perhaps the ultimate in popular architecture. The public adores them. Why? Their political interest is obvious. But there is something else, quite outside the realm of law and debate. It is their symbolism.

"In these buildings are old symbols—far older than the oldest skyscraper—that evoke a sense of timelessness, a sense of security. Simple in concept, their symbols form an unbroken thread through 200 years of American history.

"They are a unique contribution of American architecture, predating all others. Their story illustrates the extreme power of symbolism . . . and suggests that, in seeking out the symbolism inherent in our architecture, we are not necessarily prowling in the bones of the dead for mere amusement. For perhaps it is through knowing symbolism that our architecture in the future can be free."



**The timeless power of symbolism is illustrated by the Nebraska State Capitol, built in 1920. The friezes and reliefs integrated into the facade provide lessons in history, the nature of government, and morality. Although the Art Deco styling now marks the building as a period piece, its monumental scale and austerely instructional stonework still proclaim it as an entity conscious of both its responsibility and its authority.**

# RESOURCE SCARCITY AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

**The focus of this workshop was re-use, multiple-use, land use and energy conservation. The discussions opened some eyes and raised some questions about the new directions that administrators and architects need to work out together.**

Moderator William Matuszeski of the President's Council on Environmental Quality argued in his introduction that there "is plenty of reason to be upbeat about the subject of better public architecture." He pointed to examples of more and more cities "recognizing the value of combining preservation, adaptive use, and new construction in some positive and beneficial ways"—as in Washington; in Boston, "with its Old City Hall, its New City Hall, and the University of Massachusetts campus, that huge megastructure which seems to work as a place;" in Wilmington, Delaware "which has taken its old Opera House on Market Street and fixed it up as a cultural Center.

"There are things going on—not just in big cities, but everywhere."

Matuszeski then set the framework for the discussion on energy conservation: "Energy has come into play in at least four ways: In terms of the materials that are required for construction, in terms of the actual activities of construction, in the operation of buildings, and perhaps even the energy necessary to demolish older buildings and cart them off.

"In the area of the environment in a more general sense," Matuszeski continued, "there have been a lot of changes too. On the whole, the feeling has been that for purposes of resource conservation, energy conservation, air pollution control, reduction of water consumption, and more efficient use of land, we should be moving toward policies that develop more compact urban areas. . . . But again, there are conflicts. Do we put everything downtown? Or do we put everything new where the workers are? Where you have ready access to highways and other facilities close to where people live? Do you build in the suburbs? Or do you face the larger problem of helping low-income families by building downtown? And by providing perhaps a little more impetus for better transit service?

**Matuszeski pointed out a number of emerging principles in conserving our resources.** "One is that we should make better use of what we have—with new concepts of adaptive use, re-use of buildings, recycling of neighborhoods.

"Second, an effort should be made to reduce the use of virgin resources in construction, especially those that are either scarce or energy-intensive.

"Third, we should reduce the use of energy in heating, cooling, and lighting buildings. Great progress has been made here, and there's hope for more.

"Fourth, there's a general feeling that we should build on the existing urban infrastructure—not so much to reduce the cost of building (you can argue that building might cost less in an undeveloped area) but to reduce the public costs of providing services not just to the building but to the growth it will induce.

"Finally, there's a recognition that we need to make better full-time use of the facilities we have. We begin to see emerging a sense that, by placing together a number of different uses we can make maximum use of a given facility. This goes back to a 300-year-old tradition of using the schoolhouse as the town hall."

**Given these emerging ideas, the moderator also listed some of the conflicts that have arisen in applying them.** "First of all, we have to choose between the identity of the public function and the blend of that public function into the urban area around it. . . . The second issue is monumental versus human scale. Right now we're in a big push towards human scale; but that doesn't mean that we want to make our public buildings took like drive-in banks. We need to produce some sense of the monumental. . . . Third is the issue of security versus access. The fading concern about security in public buildings has not yet been reflected in our planning. . . . Fourth, there is the trade-off issue: downtown, or where most of the people live? . . . . Fifth, the original cost versus maintenance issue, which needs to be considered when you're dealing with an alternative that involves re-using an older building. . . . Finally, there's the question of preservation versus re-use. Sometimes we can get carried away in an effort to preserve a building and pretty well kill its adaptability for new use."

**An exploration of sensible new use for old buildings was shown to the Forum in a film-strip presentation made by John Karol of New Hampshire for the Society of Industrial Archeology.** The theme of the film was set this way: "Many people are finding social and economic value in un-used industrial buildings. An old tannery converted to apartments. Trolley barns are now a shopping complex. Countless other industrial facilities need no more than a turn of mind to start them towards economic re-use. . . . The human energy invested in these structures is a working past. It can serve us now . . ."

Some of the adaptive re-uses shown to the Forum audience:

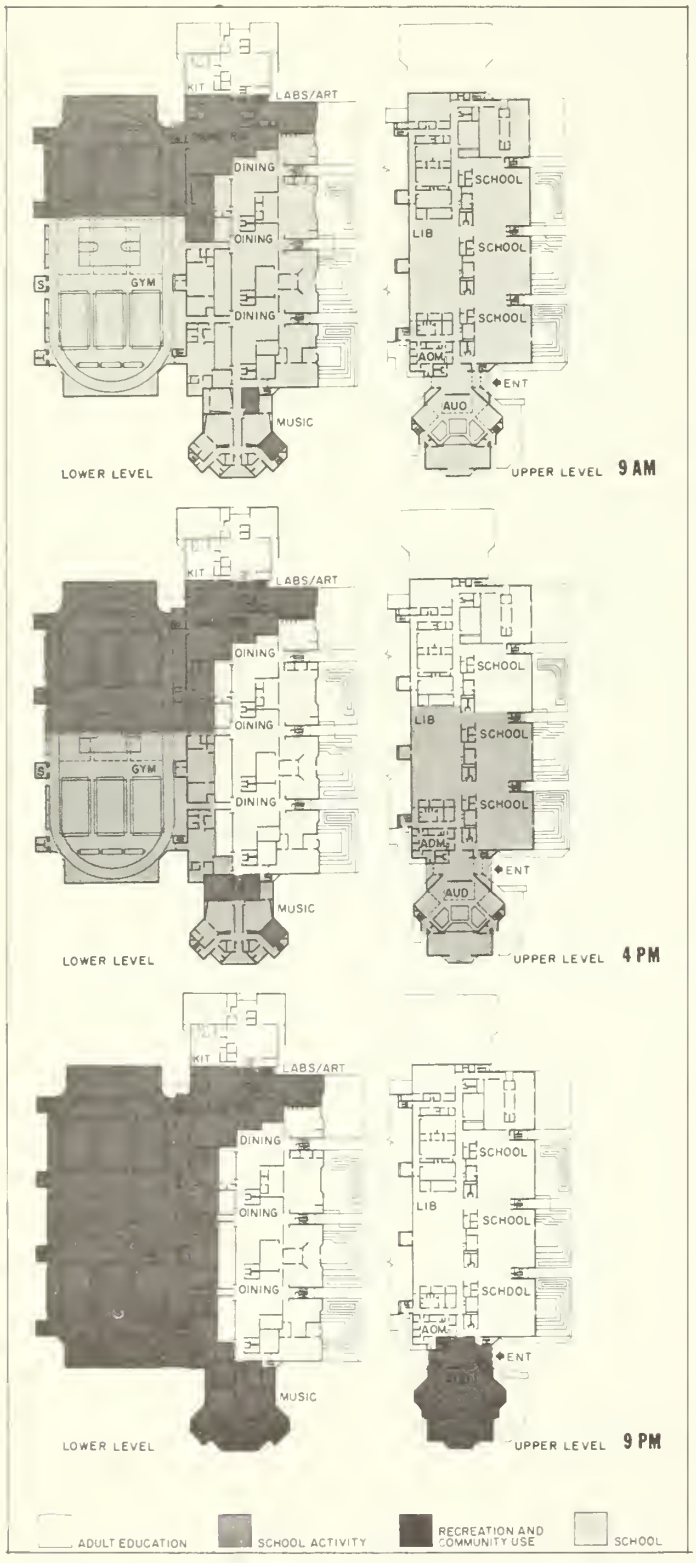
• Conversion of an old mill building into a modern industrial plant, offering the new owner "twice as much floor space for half as much money (as a new plant): a 4 to 1 cost ratio that no businessman could overlook."

• Conversion of an old machine shop into a vocational school "which the students enjoy coming to because it doesn't remind them of the school where they didn't succeed before."

• Conversion of an area of cracking towers into a park, with the towers preserved as "sculpture"—"an opportunity, on a beautiful site, for people to meditate on our industrial past and what that entailed . . . and opportunity for people to think about the whole problem of energy and recycling in our society. . . ."

• Conversion of 24-foot-diameter silos once used by Quaker Oats into apartments with living spaces of 900 to 1300 square feet.

One of the film narrators made the key point: "I think you're probably three-quarters of the way home when you start with an older building that's got a lot of what we call 'guts' to it. There's a basic human response there and if you're careful and don't foul it up, you're home free. What it takes is some imagination, some effort. . . . Sometimes when you convert buildings that were designed for a totally different function they serve the new function better, look better, and have more of a humane quality than some of the new buildings. And that's a curious thing . . . something worth pondering. . . ."




**The concept of shared use as a resource conserving scheme is exemplified by this Arlington, Virginia, junior high school, which also serves as a community center. The plans show how activities are programmed throughout the building's 18-hour day to achieve maximum use of the facilities.**

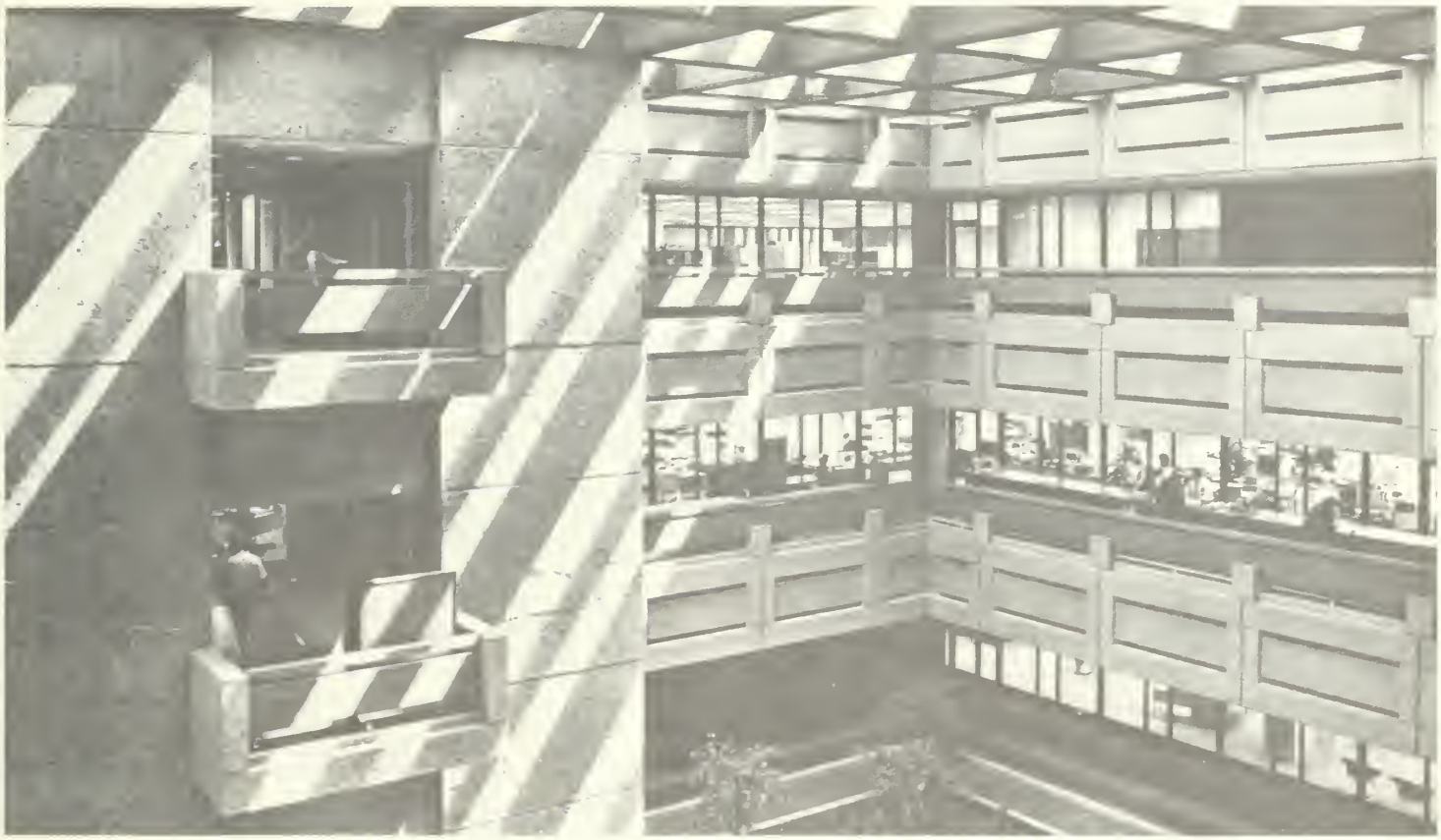
**John Eberhard, president of AIA Research Corporation and long an outspoken champion of energy conservation, sounded a clear warning that we must get on with conservation—and provided the Forum with a list of ways to begin, and ways to follow through.** Eberhard described what he called "the largest misconception with regard to energy utilization. . . . People believe, and are basing policies in the belief, that the reasons building use energy is that they have mechanical and electrical equipment in them. If you believe that, obviously, the thing to do is to make adjustments in the mechanical systems, turn down the level of lighting, do something about insulating the walls so you don't lose as much heat. But if you begin by asking the question 'Why do buildings have mechanical and electrical equipment?' then the answer [to the real question] is obvious: Buildings are intended to shelter human activity."

After reminding the audience that it is only in the last 70 years that we have had central heating, only in the last 40 years that cooling was possible, and that only 12 years ago Congress was not providing funds for air-conditioning Federal office buildings, Eberhard suggested that "when we approach the issue of energy-conscious design, we ought to begin by asking 'What are the human functions that are intended to be performed and what are the design requirements with respect to climatic adaptation and environmental conditions which ought to surround those functions?" Growing out of that question . . .

**Eberhard suggested a five-step process for conserving energy in designing a new building.** "The first step is to think clearly about energy implications when you begin to develop the programmatic requirements. That would range from the size and volume of the spaces needed to the total number of spaces and their allocation.

"The second step: Look at the environmental conditions required. What are the actual hours in which heat or light or ventilation are needed? Except in a few cases, like hospitals, buildings do not need to be designed to provide those services 24 hours a day or seven days a week . . .

"The third step, then, is to look for design solutions that



**The efficient use of energy was designed into the Santa Clara County Service Center. Air that has circulated through the offices of the main building is recovered in the central court and used to ventilate two auxiliary shop and warehouse buildings in this energy conserving design.**

are sensible adaptations of the building to the climatic characteristics." Here Eberhard suggested a return to careful study of orientation to the breeze, landscaping to provide shade, protection of windows from sun load.

"The fourth step in designing an energy-conscious building would be to be aware of the renewable sources of energy —the sun as the source of solar energy, or the wind, or geothermal currents." To make his point here, Eberhard cited the case of a house in Albuquerque which has no mechanical equipment at all—it uses solar heat stored in barrels of water for heat and hot water and has walls that open to the breeze and the sun's heat when conditions are right. Total utility bills for a year: $7.00, for the use of six 60-watt bulbs for lighting. He used this house to make a point about attitude: "The point is not that the owners are paying less for utilities, but that they are involved with solar energy because it is part of their lives; are involved in the same way you would be if you were a sailor and offered a choice between a sailboat and a motorboat. You wouldn't choose the sailboat because it costs less, but because it is a totally different way of interacting with nature."

**Eberhard also warned the administrators and architects about what he sees to be the biggest challenge: the existing building inventory and its requirements.** "It's not enough," he said, "to simply turn down the stat and adjust the ventilating air and turn off every third light. . . . What you must do is go back to the five steps listed above for programming a new building, seeing what kind of replanning could occur in the utilization of the building. How much of the building is really used for people? What levels of light are required? Could activities that don't require heat or light —like file rooms or storage space—be concentrated into one place in which environmental conditioning is turned way down?"

**Eberhard's suggested a four-step program for state and local administrators concerned with conserving energy in the buildings for which they are responsible.** "First, you ought to have someone on your staff who has a full-time responsibility for energy.

"Second, if you haven't already done so, develop guidelines for energy use not just in new buildings but existing buildings.

"Third, have a professional audit made of your existing buildings, based on energy-conscious design for that purpose.

"Fourth, support intelligent energy standards based on performance. Almost every state is, unhappily, moving in the direction of very narrowly prescriptive, narrowly oriented, mechanical/electrical conservation standards. Performance standards would be based on human needs . . . and would create a very different, and far better, set of requirements."

**A panel of state officials discussing "Resource Scarcity" raised questions of political reality in re-using or refitting older buildings, and were concerned about environmental constraints.** Ronald Lench of Pennsylvania raised this point: "We have a difficult time getting enough money to build new buildings we need, let alone get an appropriation for redesigning present buildings [to conserve energy]. Where do we find the resources?" Replied Eberhard: "One way is to make



**Designing public buildings challenges the architect to resolve the different necessities of conflicting priorities. It is not at all necessary, however, to sacrifice one objective of public buildings in pursuing another. An example of energy efficient design combined with attractive spaces for public use is this new Federal government office building in Saginaw, Michigan. The building itself is placed mostly underground and sprouts solar collectors as a test of energy-saving concepts. Much of the "roof" is landscaped to provide usable open space for the community.**

a life-cycle cost analysis of the investment required to make a building energy efficient. With the anticipated increases in the cost of energy over the coming years, you might well be able to convince the state legislature. . . . The second way, now being considered in the private sector, is to persuade the utilities to make the capital investment in a customer's building and charge it back to the user as part of the utility bill. . . . Finally, I believe that there will soon be relief available in the form of loan funds or direct investments from the Federal government for state and local governments to do something about energy conservation and redesign."

Asked why it is easier to get appropriations for new buildings rather than refitting older ones, Ronald Lench answered: "Many legislators are interested in being able to point to a new building at a ground-breaking ceremony or a ribbon-cutting; and it's not nearly as good from his public-relations standpoint to point to a building and say that it is now going to be more energy-conscious. From a political standpoint, it's just easier to sell a new building." The audience, from its reaction, clearly agreed with this point of view, and Joseph Gossen of Louisiana said this about energy costs making re-cycling more attractive to legislators: "You say the market may tend to moderate the political necessity (of building new buildings). It hasn't for thousands of years. As long as we have our present system of government, which I hope we have for a long, long time, the individual legislator voting approval of capital expenditures is going to do whatever he thinks is going to return to him the greatest impetus to get back in office. I think it's natural."

Said Joseph Cirillo from Rhode Island: "We're closely involved not only with energy conservation, but in finding new uses for the large bases which the Navy, once our largest employer, has moved out of. With help from Louisiana, we're using our Navy properties as bases for oil exploration. Our Department of Economic Development has the greatest support from the legislature in re-using and alteration of the Navy property. We started with a school, and we have about 2800 employees there now. And we may find some new supplies of that energy we're running short of . . .

"Further, we're already working hard to develop good energy standards, and we're trying to develop tax incentives at the local level to encourage redesign for energy consciousness. . . ."

John McPherson from South Carolina asked a tough question: "We've been told that in a certain length of time all the gas and all the oil is going to be gone. We've got more coal than we can shake a stick at, but the environmentalists are raising hell about using coal and converting to coal . . ." Said moderator Matuszeski: "Speaking for a Federal environmental organization, I think you can say that most environmentalists are in agreement that the long-term solution to energy in this country will be a combination of conservation and coal. The debate is over just how that coal should be removed, and how strong the conservation measures should be. To the extent that through better design and siting of buildings we can avoid the confrontation by reducing consumption, we're just that much farther ahead."

**John Eberhard concluded the discussion of "Resource Scarcity" with "three reasons for being optimistic. . . .** One is that I've found that adjusting to some of the requirements for reducing energy is a positive thing in my life. I enjoy driving 55 mph instead of racing other people at 70 mph, and I've won with a clear conscience the game I played with my wife about the thermostat setting.

"The second is that each generation does make adjustments in life style, and then look back on the previous generation's requirements as something that's either old-fashioned or something that they're not much interested in . . .

"Finally, for those of us who are architects or interested in architecture, I see an exciting prospect for a new esthetic challenge. Not for years has the architectural profession been challenged by a theme as powerful as the theme which energy-conscious design presents."

# THE IMPACT OF THE PUBLIC ARCHITECT

**Jacob Robbins, Director of Planning for Fremont, California, spoke about the "Impact, Problems, and Status of the Public Architect"—and stressed the importance of self-motivation.** In a slide presentation, Mr. Robbins outlined the techniques used in his very specific program of "interfacing between architecture, or urban design, and the practice of getting the city built." He described Fremont's system of "comprehensive design, or designing at the level of the city;" district design, a program of pre-design for selected areas of the city not yet developed;" and two stages of design review: "first, participation in the design of projects that are promoted by private individuals as they come into the city; and then through project design itself we have what we would call 'product-oriented' work. With this design-review work, we expect to see the results built into the fabric of the city, within a specific period of time—and this is the kind of work to which architects are most responsive.

Mr. Robbins spoke of the need for public architects to bring to local government the enthusiasms of architects in private practice: "I think architecture, as one of the arts, is about self-expression. It's about the need for some people in the community to have perceptions, judgments, concepts, the will to be expressive—and at the same time, of course, about the needs of the community to exploit and use the resulting ideas. That's certainly what motivates architects—that kind of searching for recognition. Searching for communication through one's art is very much a part of what people are doing when they're architects.

"But it has always seemed to me that that kind of spirit, that kind of methodology, that overview or insight into how things go together, is lacking from most of the structures of local government. It has always seemed strange to me that, in a society based upon a rich variety of experiences, interests, and activities of all kinds, when you get down to the administration of our affairs, in our governments, we find a much more monolithic, uniform, attitude.

"One of my goals [in becoming a public architect] was to try to bring into our local government some of the spirit, some of the kinds of ideas, and interest, and enthusiasms, and ways of thinking that architects, as a profession, bring to their affairs. I hope that we can be influential."

**Responding to Robbins' talk, a number of other state and local architects described some of their special problems and raised some good questions about their proper role.** Tom O'Connell of Montana pointed out that: "There's a particular problem in state government: No plan seems to be long range. We have a biennial legislature, so plans are revised every two years."

O'Connell also raised an important question: "One of our biggest hang-ups is the time it takes for health officials, fire marshals, code compliance people, and our office itself to complete our reviews. I'm not sure that the reviews are a good deal for our office, for the client agency, for the architect, or for anyone else." Speaker Robbins tended to agree: "Too many architectural firms tend to rely on the public review to make sure the regulations are met instead of having a good plan checking capacity in their own office. I think that's very unfortunate. We have [in Fremont] a lot of problems just getting compliance with codes, because the people that are doing the work aren't taking the initiative; and we have to see that it's done right. It's a very unwelcome task—and a matter of considerable concern . . ."

Another idea suggested by Robbins: "We're working with the financial institutions to see if we can find a way to coordinate their investment review with our local government review. Maybe we can compress the review process, fast-track it if you will."

Jack Huddle, director of the Department of Development for the city of Columbus, Ohio, argued the importance of effective work at the city level: "That's where the buck stops. Everybody's got a lot of ideas—ideas generated by the public sector or the private sector—but sooner or later we get involved in trying to make some sense out of all these many parts. . . . It requires a great deal of coordination between the private and public sector. I agree very much with Mr. Robbins that at the local level it is necessary to develop in-housing staff capability. We don't want to practice architecture. But we do need highly capable individuals who understand the design aspects, the technical aspects, and are experts at the business of communicating with the citizens. I can't tell you the hundreds of community meetings we get involved with each year.

"I'm not sure that those of you involved in public architecture at the state or Federal level can't learn from the activities going on in our cities and at the local level—about how the coordinating process works, and what it takes to make public buildings an effective part of a community over a long period of time. As a matter of fact, I think we have more trouble coordinating projects from the other levels of government—state projects, county projects, Federal projects—than we do with private projects. The other levels of government go ahead and do pretty much what they please. Once they acquire the land, watch out; because that's the last you're going to hear from them until the bricks and mortar start flying. We're trying to make some inroads into that problem, but it really does seem to happen that way.

"One last thought: I think the architect in private practice

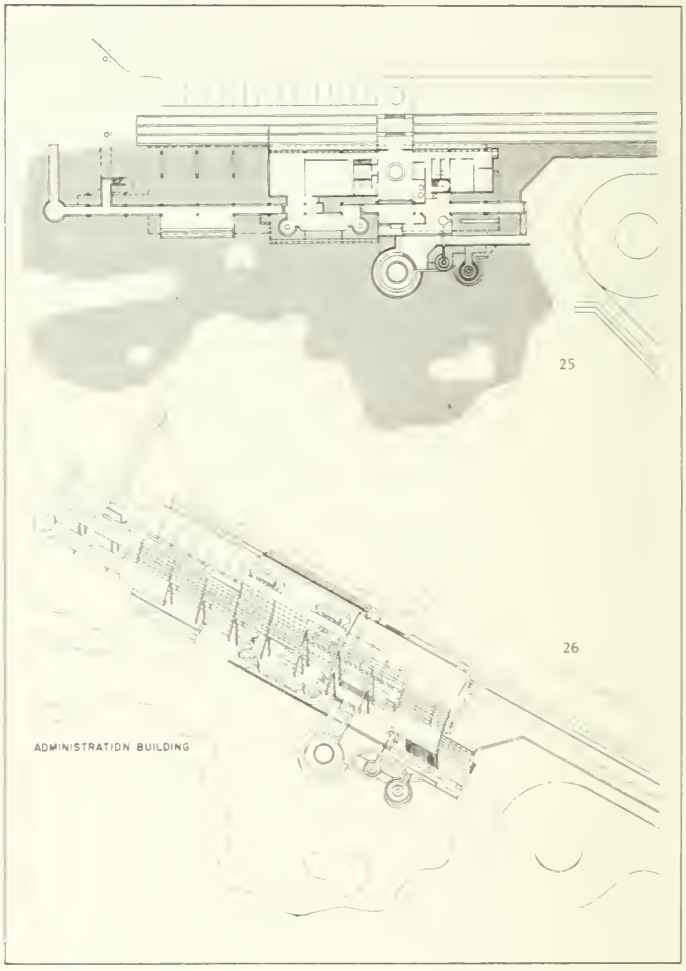
has a little different kind of obligation when working on public architecture than when involved in private work. . . . I think the obligation goes far beyond the ordinary client responsibility. On public work, client is all of us; the public at large. I suggest that perhaps the architect therefore has a different kind of responsibility and should conduct himself differently. . . ."

Fred Branch, from the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget in Georgia, spoke "to echo comments made earlier that planning has really paid off in our state. There was recently completed a master plan for the development of the capitol area in Atlanta. While not all of it will be implemented, it showed the General Assembly what the needs were in a very realistic way. As a result, we are well into the working drawing stage on some of the key elements. Without this planning, I think perhaps the development of the capitol would have gone on in the usual, topsy-growing, increments." And he made an important financial point: "This project will permit most of the space rented by the state for its agencies to be relinquished in favor of moving the agencies back into state-owned facilities. The financing of the project will be by proceeds from the sale of bonds . . . and the indebtedness will be retired by an amount roughly equal to what has been spent in rental payments. . . . Planning can go a long way in convincing the decision-makers to permit and to fund development of an area . . ."

Lamented Jonathan Moxley of Maryland's Department of General Services: "We are one of the few states at the present time that is under a mandate from the General Assembly to acquire architectural services through a competitive system—while we do not like to use the word, a competitive bidding system. This has been one of the biggest stumbling blocks in the development of our projects. . . ."

Walter Price of the State Board of Public Affairs in Oklahoma echoed the problem of long-range planning with a political system: "Every time we have a plan put together for, say, the capitol complex, it's geared either to the dream of the governor, or an architect who's tied into an incumbent administration. That doesn't mean the plan is bad—only that the next administration may throw it out. It's amazing that we've been able to do as well as we have in slowly fitting together our capitol complex. Actually, right now we're buying properties, or land, that should have been bought 15 years ago. And of course we're paying a premium. Worse, we're having to tear down buildings that never should have been built in the area. Long-range planning is essential. . . ."

**The fruits of careful planning: This water reclamation plant for Sepulveda, California, does more than just enhance water quality. The part of the site not occupied by facilities is a park and recreation area. The administration building serves as a visitors center, and guided tours of the plant are offered.**



# PROGRAMMING AND ADMINISTRATION

**As the moderator and first speaker on a panel on "Programming for Public Architecture," Jerome Butler—city architect for the City of Chicago—described an organization for project development and public participation which seems to work very well indeed.** Mr. Butler described first the organization for public architecture: "We're primarily an in-house design group. . . . Chicago's corporate structure is a complex network of departments and agencies —some of which deliver specific services to the citizens, others of which provide support services to other departments or agencies. The Bureau of Architecture, which is part of the Department of Public Works, provides such support services —in the form of professional architectural services—for all departments and agencies. . . . Our activities are organized into these general programs: police facilities, fire stations, health and neighborhood service centers, public libraries, water-treatment plans, refuse and recycling plants, airports and mass transportation facilities, municipal office buildings, bridges and underpasses, interior design, urban landscaping and beautification, and recreation.

"As City Architect, in addition to administering the Bureau of Architecture, I'm a member of the Mayor's cabinet and serve on a number of his commissions, including the Commission on Historical and Architectural landmarks and the Building Code Review Committee. Our office plays a vital role in both the initiation of capital improvement projects and carrying them out. Our various project managers work closely with client departments and relevant community groups in developing the initial programs and budgets, participate on site selection teams with the client departments and the Department of Developmental Planning, and have a total responsibility for a project from its conception to its completion.

"Our Bureau has had some success in Chicago for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the leadership of the Mayor, who is well known for his ability to get things done."

**Butler spoke on "providing the necessary professional challenges" for the in-house staff while also working with consultant architects.** "I have had the authority to create a highly professional bureau with a good technical pay plan based on merit increases. We have not held a civil service examination for professional employees in some time—we're hiring strictly on merit. Our policy is to search out and employ only the most competent people . . . and, to attract them and maintain their enthusiasm, our policy includes assigning design work to our in-house staff. I don't want to imply that the City of Chicago has created a monopoly by performing design work in-house—the fact is that a great percentage of our architectural service is provided by outside firms employed by the city. These architects enjoy good working relationships with the Bureau, which provides the outside consultant with clear programs, accurate budgets, and a single point of contact with the city. The involvement of outside architect has been, and will continue to be, an important part of the city's program."

**City Architect Butler also outlined Chicago's procedures for setting both technical and community policy—and the growing importance of keeping the community informed and involved.** "Our society is awakening to the fact that the quality of our environment can no longer be left to chance. Architects are increasingly aware that any successful project must play a proper role in the total scene; that the practice of architecture—particularly in the public sector—impinges on the life of the community at many points; and that they owe a duty to the community as well as the client. We, as architects in government, have a special responsibility to seek out input from the communities we serve, and to keep the citizens fully informed as to our programs. . . .

"In an already-built environment, heavily regulated by codes and laws and regulations, and with regional as well as city and community interests immediately affected by any change, it is essential that clear procedures be provided for both the technical and the public evaluation of changes. To make sure that all interests, whether organized or unorganized, are registered, all major matters are discussed in public hearings—and most are also heard before the City Council. Even a new neighborhood health center is usually in planning for over a year before it is built, during which time there are countless conferences among the community people, health officials, and the architect. The same is true of any other project. Agendas of city commissions are widely circulated, and notices of public hearings published in daily and neighborhood newspapers. Many consultations by community groups are initiated by the city to obtain advice; and an active community information program is carried out to give neighborhood people background information on planning issues.

"The important thing is to make sure every citizen and organization has the opportunity to be heard on every major issue . . ."

**"One of the most important functions [of the architect in government] is the preparation of the building program.** "By our definition, a building program is a written expression developed on the basis of a systematic evaluation of the

client's and the community's needs. Such an evaluation does not always suggest that we need a new building. Sometimes, we can find the solution to the client's needs by modifying existing operating procedures, or by an amalgamation of services. Other times, remodedling is appropriate. . . . There are also the elements of time and budget to be considered. Before any project moves forward to the identification of physical space, many tests and measurements are made to assure all the citizens that the project is necessary, feasible, and desirable. This kind of 'up-front work' pays off when hard questions of necessity and financing come up at a later date.

"When a project meets those tests, we then get into programming, site selection, and financing—and all of this material, with our design and planning documents, becomes part of the presentation to the client and the funding agency . . .

"Of course, it's not all perfect. Often, in trying to support one community group we end up in court defending our position to another interest. But in the public sector, those types of difficulties are a way of life . . . and you just have to keep trying to find better solutions . . ."

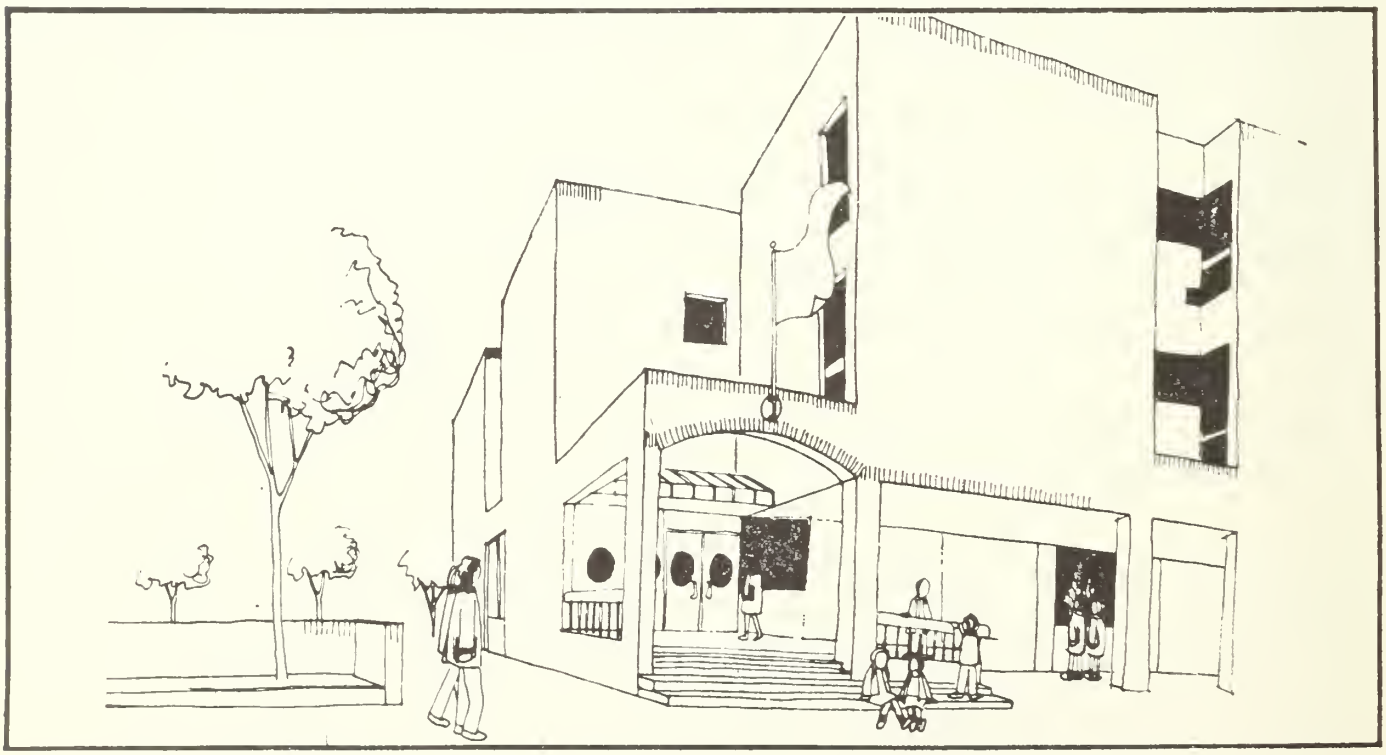
**Frank Matzke, executive director of the Illinois Capital Development Fund, discussed two of the most key elements in administering public design—budgets and selection of consultants.** "Both budgets and consultant selection," said Matzke, "have a major impact on the quality of public architecture.

"Focussing first on consultant selection: A consultant to do what? When? And how much? Most of us would think first, I think, about an architect. But the first question is 'What building?' And in order to know what building, we'd first have to have a program, and that may mean we need a consultant to anticipate the needs and develop the program. For example, at the present time we are developing the program requirements for a new state office building. Right now, there are 55 separate state entities scattered throughout Chicago—and just to decide which of those entities should be housed together in the new facility is in itself a monumental task. We have a large [290-person] and sophisticated in-house staff which is quite capable of doing the work; but on a job of that magnitude I'm going to use a consultant.

**Matzke then listed a host of other consultants who may be desirable on major jobs—even when an experienced architect is involved.** "Where the building should be located is another critical question—which means we may need site consultants to determine the best location, appraisers to set a value on parcels of land under consideration, real estate consultants to advise or help in securing options and in the actual acquisition, and of course attorneys.

"Someone has to manage all of the activities—from identifying the need to developing the program, determining the location, acquiring the site, and then managing the design and construction process. Of course, many agencies have that capability in-house, and can assign a project manager and give that person or team specific responsibility to see that the project is carried through. In other instances, though —if you're fast-tracking a job, or are going to use a multiple contracting approach, or the job is very large in scope—there is probably good reason to have a construction manager.

"Then finally we get to designing the building. Which means not just an architect—but a structural engineer, a mechanical engineer, an electrical engineer, acoustical consultants, interior designers, and so on. Then, especially

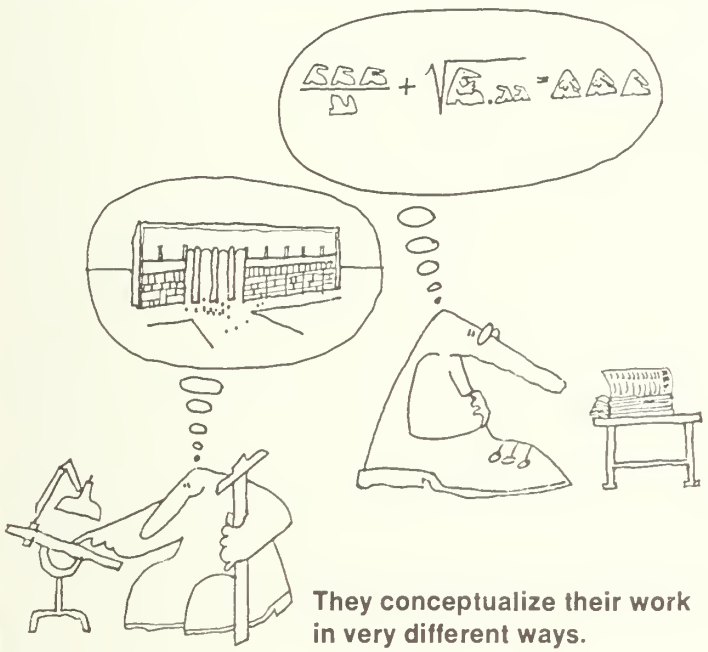


**The design for this Washington, D.C., elementary school resulted from the cooperation of local parents, educators, and project architects who hammered out the program for the building in a marathon "charette." The citizens' committee met regularly to review the evolving design.**

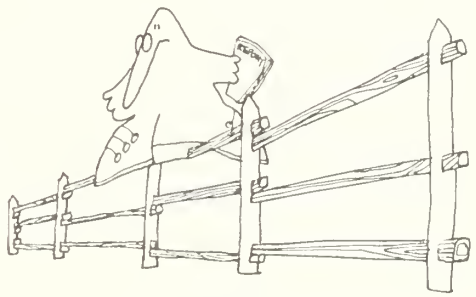
since this is public architecture and an important part of its community, we also have to think about the need for a landscape architect, soils consultant, traffic consultants, planning consultants, and others.

**Matzke emphasized that the key to good project management is clearly assigned responsibility.** "Several years ago, I did a study on contracting systems for the GSA. One of the recommendations was that GSA institute project management—assign responsibility to individuals which gave them a charter, from the Administrator, which said: 'You are a mini-commissioner for this project, with all the authority of the Commissioner of the Public Buildings Service as it applies to this project.' With that, the project manager was able to negotiate service from all of the other elements of the agency and, in accordance with a pre-determined schedule and budget, was able to make sure the job was done on time, within the budget, and was of high quality."

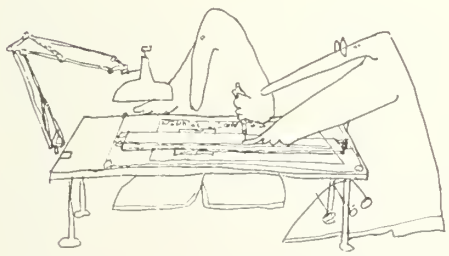
**Architects and social scientists differ greatly in their approaches to problem solving:**



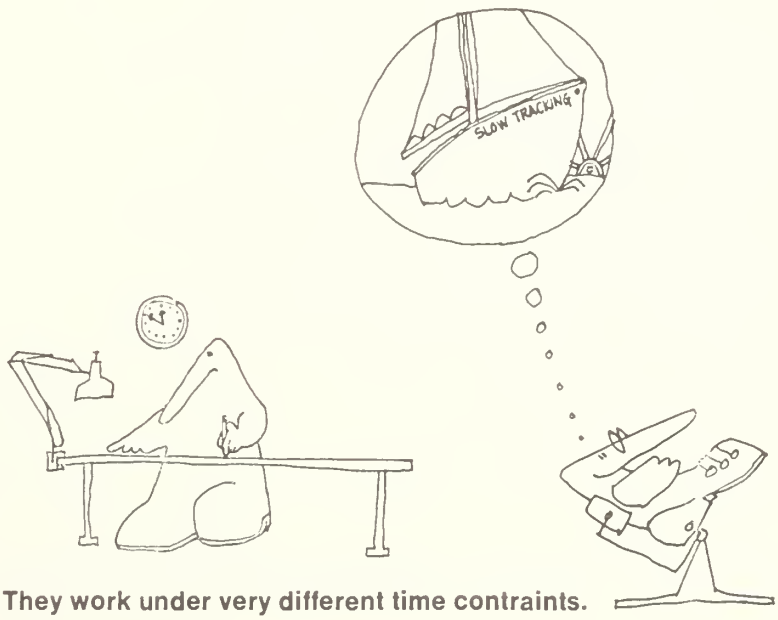
**They conceptualize their work in very different ways.**



**The social scientist rarely gives a definite answer one way or another.**



**The architect is jealous of his sovereignty at the design board.**




**They work under very different time contraints.**

**The kind of collaboration which improves building programming and design can only be achieved if they work to overcome these differences.**

**Matzke on architect-engineer selection: with a premium placed on a process that is "fair and equitable," not enough interest is being focused on the end result.**

"A lot of attention has been paid in the last few years to the selection process. But I'm concerned that most of the interest has been focused in the direction of establishing a fair and equitable process, free from so-called political influence, and very little interest has been focused on the effect of the selection process on the ultimate product, public architecture. It has been generally assumed that the more equitable the process or the less of political influence, the better the product. I'm not sure this is true. If a group of average architects are given fair and equitable treatment, we will still get only an average product. What we need is a system that will attract and collect the best available talent. . . .

**Social psychologist Edward Ostrander called for better programming and post-occupancy evaluation; for more careful diagnosis before design and more careful learning from each building we do build.** Dr. Ostrander, of the Department of Design and Environmental Analysis of Cornell University, argued the need—in the cause of better-functioning buildings—for systematic development of the program for any new building; the setting of the best possible goals.

"A program not only identifies the square footage and adjacencies, but the functional or behavioral program also clarifies how the spaces will be used by people. The program can be invaluable in learning from an existing building; it is an essential element in the post-occupancy evaluation cycle."

"When the program is well stated and understood by client and architect, there is less chance for misunderstanding as the schematics, design development and working drawing take form. This can mean fewer reiterations of drawings, and client meetings. Though many people argue for the savings in life cycle costing by careful programming, a case can be made for front end savings in the creation of drawings through well conceived programming efforts."

"Better programming and post-occupancy evaluation can be enhanced by collaboration between architects and behavioral scientists. Valuable information about the needs of the ultimate building user can be fed into the programming and schematic phases of the design process, bringing the design and the user into a close fit."

Ostrander pointed to the need for the collaborators to understand and accept their different patterns of behavior and perception. "These professionals come from different cultures—the culture of science and the culture of art/technology—and hence have different norms."

The collaboration's success depends on the recognition of these differing norms:

- *Time frame:* The designer works in terms of weeks, days and hours often while the researcher works on 6-, 12-, 18-, or 24-month cycles. "We can't wait that long!" is the designer's cry. "We can hurry and do sloppy work," answers the behavioral scientist.
- *Data credibility:* Designers will use information that is relevant to the design and makes sense in light of their professional experience. Academic researchers are seeking truth with a capitol T.
- *Responsibility and authority:* The architect is legally liable and so asserts the right to be in charge of the team. The researcher is used to being in charge of his or her team and may find the subservient position uncomfortable, wondering whether or not the behavioralist considerations will be given proper weight in the programming process.
- *Professional jurisdiction:* Architects know design and feel threatened when the researcher or research-generated data "dictate" design solutions. The architect may feel a loss of control and creativity.

**Questions to the panel on "Programming Public Architecture" revealed some frustrations felt by architects in government, and suggested some meaningful ideas for overcoming them.** In answer to a question on maintaining a balanced work load in the face of changing capital budgets each year, Chicago City Architect Butler suggested: "We built up to a [staff size] considered adequate for our average work load; then let extremely large projects or peak work out to consultants. As it works out, we let about 50 per cent of the work out to the private sector."

To another question on how you predict the right size for a state office building, considering that "organizational changes can be made overnight," Matzke suggested: "You can't go too far wrong if you set up a mix of state-owned and state-leased facilities. The Federal government has only about 25 per cent of its agencies housed in Federally owned facilities—the other 75 per cent are in leased space. I think a 50:50 basis would probably be better. But leasing gives you the flexibility you need."

Gerald Germanson of Wisconsin volunteered some warnings: "We tried leasing unneeded state office space to the Federal government—but if you want to move them out to a new and different facility 10 years later, they want that space for the same rental they started with 10 years ago.

"Another problem: We retain outside architects and engineers on about half of our work. But we have a legislative audit that comes in and wants to know why we hired this architect or that engineer. So we've had to go to a report card system. We try to maintain it on a confidential basis, but we're running into static. Certain private bodies—like school boards—want access to that information, but we don't want to be a hiring agency for everyone else on how an architect performs."

Matzke issued a warning on architect evaluation: "We have a detailed evaluation form; but when I really analyzed it, I found that what we were actually looking at was our working relationship with the architect—not what he or she produced. I recall a discussion with a project manager in New York some years ago. When I asked him how he found working with a very prominent firm, he said: 'Never again! I had the worst time with those guys. I couldn't get them to do anything on schedule. I fought with them over the budget. Every meeting was a hassle. We had a heck of a thing on change orders. Worst firm I ever worked with!' I asked then what he thought of the building. 'Best building I was ever in . . .'"

Edward Ostrander added this comment on architect evaluation: "The goals against which an architect should be judged need to be established through the project development phase. These can be summarized into several categories: the building program, design, schedules, and cost. The building program spells out the space requirements. The architect's documents spell out the requirements in terms of buildable space; the schedule spells out the time parameters; and the project budget spells out the financial limitations. Each of these categories is expandable into a line

item, a listing which can be used at the completion of the project. The more closely the building meets the series of goals, the better the post-construction evaluation will be. But it is essential to establish the goals (against which the architect will be measured) at the outset; because if you don't make the goals clear at the beginning, you'll get all kinds of rationales from your architect or other consultants as to why they were not met."

Al Wensley of New Jersey raised the question of fee schedules: "I'm concerned that we're going to be up against competitive bidding. Now that architects are no longer using a standard fee schedule and are evaluating the requirements on a job, we find that their cost-based compensation is running somewhat higher. It's going to be difficult for us to explain to our department heads or to the legislature just why—as the result of switching over from a fee schedule which was considered to be self-serving—our services are running higher. I'm afraid that if the architects aren't careful in how they use this cost-based compensation, they could be opening the door to competitive bidding."

Answered Matzke: "When you first go down the list [of compensable items] it's a big shopping list. Just as though you were in a store—you add it up and find you can't afford everything. You really have to have a pretty good idea of how much you want to spend for fees, and what services you really want. And you may have to make some compromises.

"What's happening under the new system is that you start asking for things you might not have asked for before but you think you need—and then you find that the fee is higher. Under the old percentage fee system—you probably didn't get those services, or you performed them yourself."

Another question was raised on building operation: "When you have a number of agencies into one building, does one agency act as the prime user and lease space to the others, or . . .?" Matzke replied that in Illinois, a multiple-agency is designed and built by his agency, and operated by the state GSA. But he explained the Federal system: "The Federal government now charges all Federal agencies for space in any building that it owns or leases. The rent is based on an evaluation of the quality of space and an evaluation of current commercial rates in the area. The money goes into a general building fund. This technique does make the agencies responsive in terms of the amount of space they need—because they have to go before Congress and ask for the money to pay the rent. . . ."

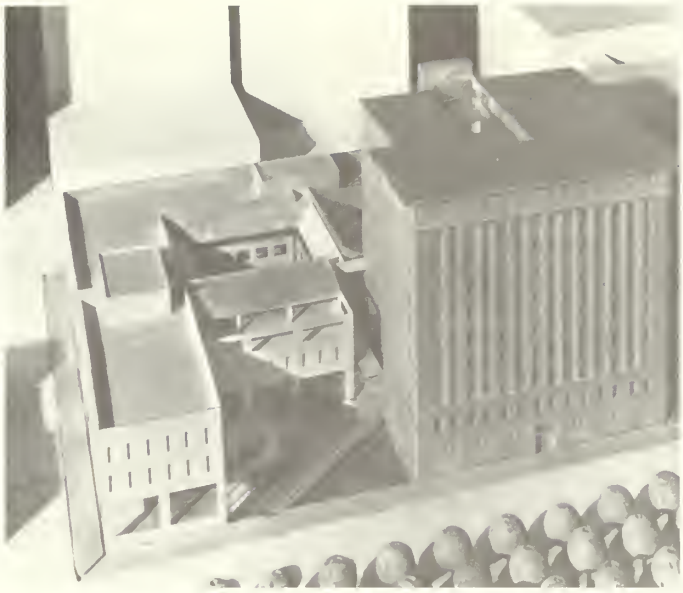
**Bob Peck of the National Endowment raised the question: "Why not design competitions?** One way around all the questions of architect selection and fees and price competition might be the design competition. GSA is already, on some large projects, requesting technical proposals—compensated where necessary—from architects on just what they plan to do with a program.

"It seems to me that it makes some sense, when you have a project facing you, to ask at least a small number of people what they would plan to do, what kind of approach they would take . . .

"The Massachusetts Department of Community Affairs has been running six-week, totally unlimited competitions that require a substantial expenditure of time to enter—and they've attracted, I believe, 80 to 150 entrants in each of the competitions they've run so far. They did get into some trouble because they were planning to use only firms which had entered the competitions for future commissions; but it is a way of getting the small firm, the firm that doesn't normally try for a government job, into your program—and a way of getting some new concepts too."

Answered Jerry Butler: "I think it's a good idea and a bad idea. It's only a good idea if you have a very clear program. It is a way of getting the younger fellows to participate."

Matzke: "I've got mixed feelings too. But the question is: On what basis do you compete? I think if you want to get the best possible solution and go for a competition, the owner should be willing to pay for the effort [involved in entering the competition]. And I don't think the results—developed in a short period of time and paid for on that basis—should be the final solution. I think they should only be the indicator of which of the finalists you think has the best potential. . . . I'd then want him to start from scratch, with a better and fuller understanding of the problem, to develop that design. . . ."



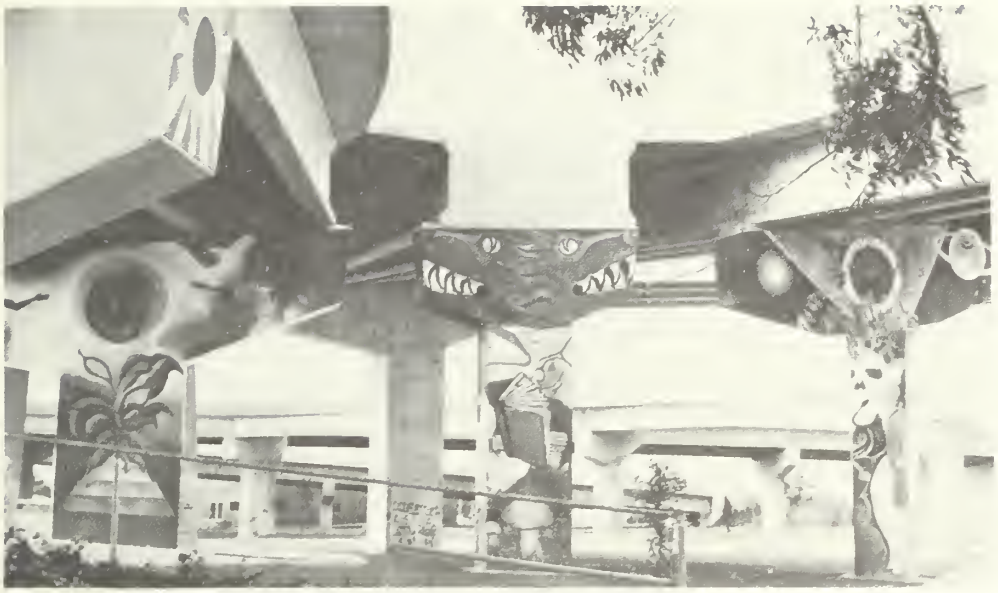
**The state of Missouri solved the architect selection problem for an administrative complex in St. Louis by sponsoring a design competition. Competition rules required out-of-state architects to associate with Missouri practitioners. The program called for re-use of Louis Sullivan's Wainwright Building with adjoining new construction; the winning entry is shown above.**

# PUBLIC ARCHITECTURE/ PUBLIC ART

**Lois Craig, director of the Federal Architecture Project for the National Endowment, moderated a panel on "Public Architecture: Art and Architecture—the public spaces, the public uses, and the use of art in public buildings.** Craig first urged all of the state and municipal people at the Forum to obtain copies of the reports available from the National Endowment For the Arts on design competitions, adaptive use, and multiple-use planning of federal spaces—as well as the over-all task force report entitled "Federal Architecture: A Framework for Debate." Said Ms. Craig: "If I may use Frank Matzke as a testimonial: I've heard him tell other groups that they could take our reports and simply substitute the word 'state' or 'local' for 'federal.' The idea of the reports is not that they hand down some kind of Golden Rule, but that they serve as a means of structuring your thoughts on their respective subjects. You might want to see how they apply to your own particular situations, or could be translated into uses at other levels of government."



**A large sculpture by Pablo Picasso dominates the plaza of the Chicago Civic Center. Several cities and states set aside a percentage of a project's construction budget to procure works of art for display in building plazas and lobbies.**



**One way of embellishing the "functional:" A local youth group in San Diego, California, was offered highway bridge supports as "canvas" for their art work.**

In her introductory remarks, Craig outlined the essential questions: "How should public spaces be used . . . what are they for? Our public buildings, by and large, are just office buildings. They're often located in urban centers where there is a lot of street and commercial activity around the building. The buildings themselves are rather dead. . . . This is the place where the public meets its government. We should make the assumption that government should be accessible to citizens—and our architecture and our use of architectural spaces should communicate that message. We chose the people on our panel to show you how, through their work, they have addressed the use of public spaces; how they communicate a message about government through those uses. . . ."

**The first speaker was Betty Cook, director of the Office of Cultural Affairs of the City of Boston, who told of the quantity and quality of celebration in Boston City Hall.** "In 1968 I was invited to join the city government and help open the new City Hall [built from a competition-winning design by Kallman, McKinnel & Knowles]. The building has great spaces, and out front is a great plaza; a great public space which is highly used, especially in the summertime."

In her slide presentation Cook made a number of suggestions for the use of public spaces:

- On officers at the door, or tour guides: "If I walk into the building and see any of them slouching, or smoking, or drinking coffee, they're not there the next day. It is extraordinarily important that the person who is the first-seen representative of the government, of the Mayor, presents himself or herself in a style which, hopefully, will please the taxpayers."
- On art in public buildings: "People have gotten so excited about City Hall that they want to show things there all the time." She showed a sculpture "which had been purchased by a private developer for an office lobby—but he wanted it to be placed in City Hall first . . ."
- On the use of public spaces: "When the building was designed, a large gallery was designed with it—and there was a great deal of confusion over who was to occupy that room. When we opened the building, I had arranged an art show in that space—and there's never not been an art show there ever since. We've had a quilt show; shown the work of art students in the area colleges; shown the portraits of Boston's mayors; had a show on Copley Square. We have a City Artfest—showing art work by people from the Police, Fire, and Public Works Departments and the Redevelopment Authority and so on—it's a non-juried show; instead the city employees are asked to vote the work of art they like best . . . We've also shown art from the Museum of Fine Arts.

"We expend a great deal of energy keeping this space constantly programmed with good things, and offer it rent-free to those you wish to use it. But if, after the opening show, there hadn't been an energetic wish to keep art flowing through the space, it shortly would have been assigned to some other branch of the government for use as a meeting room or a library—the city does need conference rooms, and I cannot tell you how many people have tried to get ahold of this space. But though many city workers and visitors who've come to conduct business with the city don't always understand what we're showing, these shows do help make them think of the Boston City Hall as their space.

"In addition . . . on the lower floors, where people are constantly coming through for licenses, or to the tax office, we've used smaller spaces and waiting areas—which were not programmed at all to be art spaces—for all kinds of exhibits: by individual artists, by Girl Scouts, by various ethnic groups. One suggestion: I would be wonderful if architects could design in a few moldings to hang pictures and a few tracks for spotlights. . . . I think it would be wonderful if somebody could learn from our experience. . . .

"In the main lobby, we've had celebrations by 17 different ethnic groups; and besides being artistically interesting, if you don't think it makes good politics, well. . . .

**In summing up, Ms. Cook underscored a few problems, but some great rewards.** "I wish we could find ways to work more effectively with the maintenance department, and that we could solve some problems of getting people in and out of the building and of security. I wish the architects had thought more about the great public use of the building, worried a little more about acoustics in the great spaces, and provided better ways to hang art. I wish we had a kitchen; whenever we have a luncheon we have to bring it in. But I want very much to underscore the great rewards of having public buildings designed for use by the citizens. It's

just a beautiful concept—we've had over 60 exhibits this very year. We've had over 50,000 people in for receptions. We've had over 6000 tours. So we think we've made the building work in a way that makes government more accessible to the people. And we have used the arts as a tool to encourage more people to come into the building."

**Sidney Brower, Chief of Design Analysis for the City of Baltimore, spoke on "Public Buildings and the Visual Arts"—and had some evocative suggestions on "what is art; what's good?"** Under the "one per cent [of construction cost] for art" program, Baltimore has developed a number of programs ranging from integration of fine art into important new buildings to a program of "embellishment-able" booths for neighborhood festivals. Mr. Brower began his presentation with a slide of an inner city backyard that had been extensively developed by a resident: "I wouldn't like to get hung up on an argument as to whether old tires painted up and plastic plants are, in fact, art objects. I'd rather point to the *feeling* of this space—it's occupied, it's clean, it shows that someone is responsible and involved. . . .

"The same kind of feeling in a public place can be developed: an expression of the collective entity which is the public.

"The Baltimore program functions through a Civic Design Commission, with five appointed members who review the design concept initially and then review the art project as it evolves. The artist is selected by the architect—and the intent is that the artist will work along with the architect to develop an over-all concept for the finished building." Mr. Brower showed varied examples: an exterior pool, a fountain, a playyard designed by a sculptor, art in various schools (including one very large high school, with four identical entrance halls, in which "students manage to tell where they are by relating to the works on the wall").

Mr. Brower pointed out that, predictably: "There have been complaints with respect to some of the art work. We attempt to overcome this through some of the actions of our separate design advisory panel, which includes architects, behavioral scientists, architectural historians, and landscape architects, and which reviews all design proposals at at least three stages. A member of our Civic Design Commission sits in with this design advisory panel right from the first stage, so that he or she can be aware of the architectural development and make suggestions as to the kinds of applications of the one per cent [for art] which will be agreeable to them. This new process has not been going on for long, but we have already noticed a great increase in interest in putting the one per cent for art into, say, paving; or a screen wall—something which would improve or develop upon the architectural design itself.

"We have another series of public projects based on City Walls, a National Endowment project. Our Mayor's Advisory Commission on Arts and Cultural has taken over that City Walls project in an unusual way: Using CETA funds, they have employed ten artists and ten artisans in full-time employment. These people work with local community groups, developing ideas for wall paintings. In less than a year, they have developed and completed something like 50 projects. The money for the paint comes from the program; the city supplies the premises—a unused firehouse—where the artists develop their designs. During the winter, they have a program of interior wall painting.

"In still other efforts in Baltimore, the program has accomplished the colorful painting of a large industrial plant at the gateway to the city, the repainting of bridges in bright primary colors, and the rehabilitation of the City Hall, especially its major ceremonial spaces.

"Another program, run by the Commission on Historic and Architectural Preservation, is a salvage depot. A great many of the older buildings are being pulled down, and the purpose of the depot is to make available to citizens some of the artifacts from the old buildings—the moldings, the fireplace surrounds, the old windows. They're stored and sold to interested residents of Baltimore for personal use.

"Finally, I'd like to touch on temporary buildings—which you must remember are also public buildings. We're concerned ourselves with bus stops. And currently, with the help of a grant from the National Endowment, we are looking into the design of a multi-purpose festival booth suitable for lending out to various neighborhoods—a structure that would readily adapt itself to various uses and decorations and embellishments that the neighborhoods want to put on them for 'their' festivals. . . ."

**The day's last speaker was Fred Kent from Project for Public Spaces, which has made detailed studies of public spaces, plazas, building lobbies, parks, playgrounds, underground areas, and street systems.**

Kent's first point: "If you orient yourself to people and what people are doing in the various urban spaces, you come up with different ways of using the streets and pedestrian areas than you would if you study the space from the point of view of a traffic engineer." He showed a film demonstrating the many ways people use the streets and sidewalks—for window shopping, walking in groups, walking alone, walking holding hands, walking slow, walking fast, waiting for friends, sitting ("in the few places where there is sitting space"), waiting for busses, getting on and off busses, signalling for taxis.

Mr. Kent showed some of the vehicular-oriented planning which adversely affects pedestrians: cross walks that are narrower than the sidewalk, causing a constriction; traffic signals set to ease traffic flow which cause pedestrians to halt every block and are very ineffective in moving along slower-moving buses.

He showed how, in summer, people tended heavily to use the shaded side of the street—"a fine argument for putting in street trees not just for esthetics, but for economic reasons—to attract business to the 'sunny' side." He also revealed the results of investigations of the way people use street benches and planters, passive sitting areas, and the like.

The heart of the Project research is more functional planning of public spaces—thinking not just of a "sidewalk" but of a space with, say, a window-shopping area, a pedestrian walkway, a waiting area, space for taxis or private cars stopping for a short period separate from parking space and bus stop zones. "By showing what goes on on the street and sidewalks we're trying to discover what can be done to improve the planning and use of these public spaces. . . ."

**The panel and participant discussion that followed described some of the ways "art in architecture" programs have gone well—and some of the ways they have fallen flat.** Michael Fitts of Tennessee commented that that state's legislature "doesn't see fit to pass a one-percent-for-art bill—it usually relates the amount of square footage we won't be able to build if we spend one percent on art. Conversely,



**With the help of contributions from several airlines, New York City set up an outdoor cafe in a little used plaza near the municipal building. Public building lobbies and plazas can be programmed as settings for artistic and other festivities.**

on a project where we did have a significant allowance for graphics—on a $200 million vocational program with very spartan facilities—one of the architects decided he didn't think graphics were all that important and almost convinced the Board of Education to recoup the money. The point I'm making is that the best way to get the art in architecture is to go for architcts who will fight for it. . . ."

Sam Pool, from New Mexico, asked: "How do you approach a state legislature to convince them of the value of public spaces—like the spaces and galleries in Boston City Hall—in a state building? Answered Betty Cook: "It just takes an extraordinary amount of energy to get the space designed in, and then to keep it active. You have to keep selling the idea that it's not just a good idea—it's really good politics."

Commented Al Durkee from Michigan: "With the Governor's support, we have organized a Special Commission on Art in State Buildings. It is composed of about 14 leading citizens—and is working on procedures for acquiring and securing art in state buildings, with both public and private funds.

"My question: How do you secure art from vandalism?" Answered Betty Cook of Boston: "I don't know. We've had, with all of the traffic and activity in City Hall, 13 objects stolen. But to answer your question, we're thinking of having nothing valuable in the lower portions of the building because we can't secure it. The main gallery we can lock. We have told the Mayor that we need better security. We now must ask people who organize the exhibits to sign a release form; we have no insurance, and anyone who wishes to show must know they do it at their own risk or must have their own insurance."

Mr. Durkee also asked: "How do you identify the one percent art? I notice that a lot of the art was an integrated part of the structure, for example wall murals." Answered Mr. Brower: "The architect and the agency head decide on how they would like to use the one per cent. It might be a piece of sculpture—but it might even be special graphics or directional signing. The civic design commission has the right to decide whether that is a suitable use for the one per cent."

Steve Glassman, representing Baltimore County, explained that, "We have run across all of the same problems as Betty Cook has working with the county office building complex in Towson. There are no moldings for hanging pictures, no platforms for displaying sculpture, no way to lock the building. We've had problems with vandalism. . . . But we have started a program with almost no funds. We've started small exhibitions in the executive offices and the administrative spaces of the building, with paintings we've gotten on loan from galleries and the museum in Baltimore City—to try and foster mutual cooperation.

"We have a new mandate for re-doing all graphic work in the county—both in buildings and out on the public roads. And we are trying to encourage the use of color in graphics in buildings. We have a series of booklets—and a county fair trailer that goes around promoting these activities."

Doug Hamner of Virginia made a realistic point: "In the face of higher construction budgets and decreased revenues, the people seem to be getting fed up with making governmental facilities finer. They want us to just operate the government. We hear more criticism about a piece of marble in a lobby than we do abou the lack of art in that lobby."

Countered Lois Craig: "We're not just talking about art *in* public buildings; we're talking about the art *of* public buildings. For example, many of our Federal office buildings have GPO bookstores, and they are very popular. But they are often in the basement. It would not cost any money to put them on the first floor. There is much that you can do within the constraints under which you operate—and I know they are getting tougher, economically—that can communicate something about the building and the government's attitude. It also relates to how clean you keep the building, the reception your guides give, where you place pamphlets . . . it is all related to the art of public places.

"For all of the frustrations, the one thing that unites us is a concern for the art of public life."

# FOR THE FUTURE

**Although participants in the first Forum on Public Architecture evidenced a variety of positive reactions to their two-day meeting, the benefit most frequently mentioned was learning how their colleagues dealt with shared goals and concerns.** Exposure to each other's failures and successes shed new light on old problems, and stimulated innovative approaches to related situations.

It was the very usefulness of the Forum that pointed out the inadequacy of a single conference in meeting the need for communications among those responsible for public architecture. Some issues raised during the discussions, such as the tension between the will to make art available to the public and the need to protect it from vandalism, had not been resolved. It was also noted that the continuing evolution of construction and energy technologies — to say nothing of the attitudes of public and legislative groups — warranted the establishment of a more regular means of exchanging experiences. Harry Burkhart summed it up for everyone: "I think that this has probably been the first time we've had so many states and municipalities represented at one time for this kind of discussion. I'd like to see it be the start of a national organization aimed at furthering what we are all trying to do — make our buildings look and function better and last longer."

Consideration of several alternatives for ongoing communications followed. The relative merits of regional and national organizations and combinations thereof were debated, as were the advantages of limiting meetings to government architects and administrators vs. including contractors, planners, engineers and even legislators. Many participants felt that a focus on workshops in future meetings would be useful, and all agreed that the emphasis should be on working sessions rather than social events.

**In the face of the general enthusiasm, Forum moderator Harry Harmon closed the meeting with and invitation for further participation.** "The AIA Architects in Government Committee has been wrestling with many of the issues we've discussed here. It is an active committee, and I would like to invite any of you to attend our meetings and hear out deliberations.

"I will also suggest to the American Institute of Architects that they think about the best way to continue what we've started in this Forum --- a very fruitful communications network throughout the United States, serving the cause of public architecture."



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